NATION

How can flights be so pricey? HC tears into govt

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Adani to invest up to ₹12 lakh cr in India

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

Junior World Cup: India beat Argentina 4-2 to win bronze

≫ Page: 8 ≪

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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B'luru South parks to be closed in the afternoon

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Visiting times for the public in all parks coming under the jurisdiction of the Bengaluru South City Municipal Council will be from 5 am to 11 am and from 4 pm to 8 pm, Greater Bengaluru Authority said in a notification on Wednesday. *—Salar News*

Seven injured as leopard attacks Nagpur residents

NAGPUR, 10 DEC

A leopard injured up to seven people after attacking residents in Shiv Nagar, Pardi area of Nagpur, Maharashtra, on Wednesday morning. The sighting sparked panic among locals, who immediately alerted the authorities. Responding swiftly, teams from the forest department and a wildlife treatment centre tranquillised the big cat and rescued it safely. The injured were taken to hospital for treatment, Deputy Conservator of Forests Dr Vinita Vyas confirmed. This is the second incident in the area this month, following a leopard rescue on 19 November. Officials are urging residents to remain vigilant and report any further sightings promptly. *—PTI*

In a 1st, Karnataka tables hate speech bill in Assembly

BJP opposes calling it assault against dissent

BELAGAVI, 10 DEC

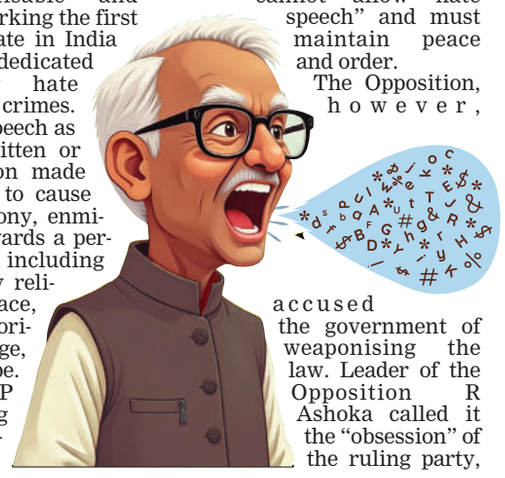
CM Siddaramaiah and DK Shivakumar chair a meeting in Belagavi
PHOTO: X/@SIDDARAMAIAH

The Karnataka government on Wednesday tabled a sweeping bill to curb hate speech, proposing penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment and fines reaching Rs 1 lakh. The legislation, The Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crime (Prevention) Bill, was introduced in the Assembly by Home Minister G Parameshwara amid fierce protests from the BJP, which claimed Congress government was attempting to "snatch freedom of expression".

Cleared by the cabinet on 4 December, the Bill makes offences cognisable and non-bailable, marking the first instance of a state in India introducing a dedicated law targeting hate speech and hate crimes. It defines hate speech as any spoken, written or visual expression made with the intent to cause injury, disharmony, enmity or hatred towards a person or group, including those defined by religion, caste, race, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, or tribe.

Despite BJP MLAs shouting "No" and seeking a division of votes, Speaker UT Khader allowed the Bill to be tabled.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar defended the move, saying the government "cannot allow hate speech" and must maintain peace and order.



The Opposition, however, accused the government of weaponising the law. Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka called it the "obsession" of the ruling party, alleging it was designed to curb political dissent. BJP MLC Chalavadi Narayanaswamy claimed the Bill targeted Opposition voices, arguing that complaints filed by BJP members rarely resulted in FIRs, while their own social media posts invited swift arrests.

Under the Bill, hate crimes include promoting, inciting or abetting hate speech. First-time offenders face one to seven years' imprisonment and fines up to Rs 50,000, while repeat offenders may receive two to 10 years and fines up to Rs 1 lakh. The legislation empowers Executive Magistrates and senior police officers to take preventive action and allows the government to direct intermediaries and service providers to block or remove hate content. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Nehru did vote chori, says Shah; Oppn walks out of LS

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the Opposition during a Lok Sabha debate on electoral reforms, triggering a dramatic walkout and a heated exchange with Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi. Defending the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, Shah alleged that the Opposition was anxious because the process would delete "illegal immigrant voters" who, he claimed, support their parties.

Shah accused the Congress of three major instances of "vote chori". He said the "first vote theft" occurred after Independence when Jawaharlal Nehru became prime minister despite Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel reportedly having greater support among Congress leaders. The "second", he said, was when Indira Gandhi granted herself immunity after her election was set aside by court. The "third", he claimed, concerned Sonia Gandhi allegedly becoming a voter before acquiring Indian citizenship, a matter he said had reached the civil courts.

As Shah spoke, Rahul Gandhi repeatedly intervened, challenging him to a debate on "vote chori". Gandhi said, "I challenge you to have a debate on my press conferences." Shah retorted that Gandhi "must learn to be patient" and could not dictate what he spoke in Parliament.

Shah further criticised the Congress, saying the party blames "BJP agents, judges, EVMs and voter lists" for its electoral defeats, when "the real reason is its leadership".

Gandhi later accused Shah of giving a "completely defensive response", saying the minister failed to address concerns over transparent voter lists, EVM architecture, and allegations of BJP leaders voting in multiple states. "We are not scared," Gandhi said. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Parties to get dead voters' list before SIR draft rollout

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday said the booth-level agents appointed by political parties will be provided with a list of dead, shifted and dead voters before the publication of the draft voters' list in the 12 states and Union territories where the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise is underway.

The draft electoral rolls in these nine states and three Union territories will be published on 16 December.

The EC said the chief electoral officers (CEOs) of the 12 states and Union territories have been asked to share a booth-wise list of absent, shifted and dead or duplicate voters with the booth-level agents (BLAs).

These are the voters with whom the booth-level officers (BLOs) could not establish contact despite three attempts.

The EC had followed a similar procedure during the Bihar SIR. *—PTI*

India's trade offer is the best we got, says US

WASHINGTON, 10 DEC

The United States is holding trade talks with India. US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer told lawmakers that India has made "the best offer we have ever received." The talks focus on expanding American farmers' access to Indian markets, especially for crops like sorghum and soy.

Speaking at a Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing on Tuesday, Greer said a US trade team is in New Delhi, discussing agricultural matters.

Greer added that India could become "a viable market" at a time when US farmers face fluctuating demand from China.

He also spoke about the discussions with India on tariffs and market access in other sectors.

On zero-tariff commitments for civil aviation parts under the 1979 Aircraft Agreement, he said discussions are "fairly far advanced" and added that the US could extend similar treatment if India agrees to reciprocal access.

Committee Chair Jerry Moran also mentioned India as a potential buyer of US ethanol. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

DGCA to station staff at IndiGo HQ after crisis

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has set up an eight-member oversight team, following the Indigo airlines cancelling flights in large numbers due to crew shortage over the last couple of weeks.

According to an order issued by DGCA on Wednesday, the oversight team will comprise a Deputy Chief Flight Operations Inspector, senior FOIs (Flight Operations Inspector), and two FOIs.

Of them, two members will be deployed at the airline's corporate office on a daily basis, and they have been mandated to look at the airline's total fleet, average stage length (distance that an aircraft travels in one leg), total number of pilots, network details, crew utilisation in hours, and crew under training, among others.

These two members of the oversight team will also keep a watch on flights per day, unplanned leave per day, total number of sectors affected on account of crew shortage, as well as cockpit and cabin crew on standby per day per base, the DGCA order said.

Meanwhile, IndiGo on Wednesday cancelled nearly 220 flights at three major airports, including Delhi and Mumbai. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

Odisha burns: Woman's head found, net banned

MALKANGIRI, 10 DEC

The Odisha government on Wednesday extended the suspension of internet services for another 24 hours in violence-hit Malkangiri district, while the missing severed head of 51-year-old Lake Podiami of Rakhelguda village was recovered about 15 km from where her body was found on 4 December.

The prohibitory orders clamped in the two villages - Rakhelguda and MV 25 - continued to remain in force, while the government further extended the internet service suspension period by another 24 hours based on the recommendation of the Malkangiri District Collector. The earlier ban was in force till 12 noon on Wednesday, an official said.

Violence had erupted on Sunday afternoon after the recovery of the woman's headless body
PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

The woman's mortal remains were buried at her village on Tuesday amid tight security and in the presence of senior officers. "After their mother strayed into human habitation and was captured on 28 November for attacking two farmers.

Veterinarian Dr Adarsh examined the cubs and initially found them in good health. They were then shifted to the Mysuru Zoo's Chamundi Wildlife Rescue, Conservation and Rehabilitation Centre at Koorgalli. However, all four later fell ill and died due to the viral infection. Deputy Conservator of Forests Paramesh told Salar News that post-mortem and lab reports are awaited to confirm the precise cause of death. The tigress, meanwhile, remains in good health. *—Salar News*

recovery of the severed head, the police is undertaking related investigation to ascertain the circumstances that led to the woman's murder," an officer said.

Violence had erupted on Sunday afternoon after the recovery of the woman's headless body. A large number of tribals from Rakhelguda village allegedly attacked MV-26 village, a settlement of Bengalis in the district. Around 200 houses were damaged, some of them set on fire as the tribals went on a rampage at MV-26 village.

Meanwhile, the police have arrested Subha Ranjan Mandal, 42, on charge of killing the tribal woman, whose killing led to violence in the tribal dominated district. *—PTI*

4 rescued tiger cubs die of deadly virus in Mysuru

MYSURU, 10 DEC

Ten days after four tiger cubs rescued near the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve were reunited with their mother, all four have died following a suspected virus attack. Forest Department officials said the cubs succumbed to feline panleukopenia at the Koorgalli Chamundi Wildlife Rescue Centre, where they had been under observation since their rescue in November.

The cubs were first spotted crying in a maize field at Gowdanakatte village in Hanagodu hobli, Hunsur taluk. The field belonged to a farmer, Ravikumar, who alerted authorities. Forest personnel launched a search operation and rescued the cubs, who had been left behind after

The cubs were first spotted crying in a maize field at Gowdanakatte village in Hanagodu hobli, Hunsur taluk
PHOTO: PTI

Goa fire: No interim relief for owners

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

A Delhi court on Wednesday declined interim relief to Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra, owners of Goa's Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub, where a devastating fire killed at least 25 people on 6 December. The brothers, currently in Thailand, had sought four weeks' transit anticipatory bail and interim protection from arrest upon their return to India.

> "We, too, are victims" -Luthra bros

Additional Sessions Judge Vandana issued notice to Goa authorities on their plea and listed the matter for hearing on Thursday. The Luthras, primary owners of the Arpora-based nightclub, fled to Phuket shortly after the tragedy. An Interpol Blue Corner Notice has been issued against them.

Officials claim that the duo booked Thailand tickets while fire was still raging at the club. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

DELHI TANDOORS GO COAL FREE TO FIGHT SMOG

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has ordered a strict ban on the use of coal and firewood in tandoors across all hotels, restaurants and open eateries in the city. Only electric or gas-based tandoors and other clean-fuel options will be permitted.

Referring to the CAQM's approved fuel list and GRAP guidelines, the DPCC has directed enforcement teams and municipal bodies to ensure strict compliance. Senior officials have been instructed to inspect eateries and act against any violations. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has been authorised to impose fines of up to Rs 5,000 on establishments found using coal or firewood. The order comes as several areas, including Jahangirpuri, Mundka, Nehru Nagar, Pusa, Vivek Vihar and Wazirpur, recorded "very poor" air quality, with only a few locations reporting "moderate" levels. *—PTI*

DESI GOES GLOBAL

UNESCO adds Deepavali to Cultural Heritage list

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

India's Deepavali — the festival of lights — was on Wednesday inscribed on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, sparking celebrations to mark the earning of the coveted tag.

The decision was taken during a meeting of UNESCO being held at the Red Fort in New Delhi.

Chants of 'Jai Hind', 'Vande Mataram' and 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' rent the air as UNESCO announced that Deepavali has been added to the list after a discussion by its committee.

Artistes dressed in traditional attire performed in front of the main stage while images of Deepavali played on the big screen. This is the 16th element from India to be inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The 15 other elements already inscribed on this UNESCO list are the Kumbh Mela, Durga Pooja of Kolkata, Garba dance of Gujarat, yoga, the tradition of Vedic chanting and Ramlila. *— PTI*

PHOTO: X

3 dead, 1 injured in Mudhol lorry crash

BAGALKOT, 10 DEC

Three people were killed and one seriously injured in a head-on collision between two trucks near Bantanur Cross in Mudhol taluk on Tuesday night, police reported on Wednesday. The deceased have been identified as Mallikarjun, 22, Revanasiddappa, 20, and Suresh, 33. The injured, Ramesh, 22, was hospitalized and is under observation. According to police, a bulk carrier transporting cement collided with another truck, crushing one of the vehicles and causing the bulk carrier to topple. Two of the truck's occupants the driver and his helper died instantly, along with the driver of the cement-laden bulk carrier, Superintendent of Police Siddharth Goyal said. Rescue operations involved a JCB to remove the mangled vehicle and free the trapped survivor. Police are investigating the cause of the accident. *—PTI*

Three held with 1.5kg hydro ganja in City

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Bengaluru's Sanjaynagar Police have arrested three individuals for selling the banned narcotic hydro ganja, seizing a total of 1.5 kg valued at over Rs 1.05 crore. The operation followed a tip-off on 9 December. Two suspects were caught near Railway Parlor Road, Bhoopsandra, with 266g of the drug, Rs 500 and a weighing machine. They revealed they purchased the narcotic from an acquaintance in Kerala and provided details of a third accomplice. Police then arrested the third suspect near Mandur, Avalahalli, recovering 118g and taking the car used in the offence into custody. Further searches uncovered 666g of hydro ganja at one of their homes. The three are in police custody, while authorities track the Kerala supplier. *—ANI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Focus on dvpt, not Sanatan Dharma: Lad to Kalyan

BELAGAVI, 10 DEC

Labour Minister Santosh Lad hit out at Andhra Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, saying that he politics wasn't cinema. He told Kalyan, a Telugu film industry star to focus on development works instead of talking about Sanatan Dharma. "Public service is not a film," Lad told press. Sanatan Dharma doesn't impact the common man, Lad added. "Nothing works here in a cinematic way. There is no space for gimmicks, and people will never applaud mere acting. Kalyan is also well aware of this. Yet, he has put himself in a situation where he is forced to act even in politics." *—Salar News*

Brahmin Dvpt Board to felicitate SSLC toppers

MYSURU, 10 DEC

Karnataka State Brahmin Development Board chairman Asagodu Jayasimha said the Board will felicitate 98 SSLC toppers from Mysuru and Bengaluru divisions on 13 December at Saradavilas Educational Institution, Krishnamurthypuram. Last year, 127 toppers from all districts received the Vishwamitra award, and toppers from other divisions will be honoured separately soon. Jayasimha said thousands of beneficiaries have been selected for loans and financial assistance under schemes promoting self-employment and economic support for poor Brahmins. Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao will inaugurate. *—Salar New*

Drugs & cosmetics bill tabled in Assembly

Cow slaughter bill missing in Belagavi despite being listed

BELAGAVI, 10 DEC

The Drugs and Cosmetics (Karnataka Amendment) Bill, 2025, was among the twelve Bills tabled in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Wednesday.

As per the Bill, it is considered necessary to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940 to empower the State government to specify such authority and officers, to carry out the functions of the Central Drug Laboratory and the Director, in respect of drugs and cosmetics in Karnataka, with prior approval from the Centre.

It places the burden of proof on the person from whose possession the drug or cosmetic was seized. While prescribing all offences punishable under the Act to be cognizable and non-bailable, the Bill also prescribes rules making power to the State.

Also tabled was the Karnataka Labour Welfare Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which amends the Karnataka Labour Welfare Fund Act to redefine "establishments" as those having more than 10 employees instead of 50. It also proposes to introduce an e-banking system and online banking in the procedure of contribution.

CM Siddaramaiah, HM G Parameshwara and DyCM DK Shivakumar in Belagavi, Wednesday *PHOTO: SALAR*

Karnataka Rent (Amendment) Bill that seeks to achieve the principle of "minimum government maximum governance" by decriminalisation of minor offences and rationalisation of monetary penalties, was also introduced. The Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments (Amendment) Bill proposes to remove discriminatory provisions against individuals affected by leprosy.

Also tabled was Karnataka Cine and Cultural Activists (Welfare) (Amendment Bill, 2025; the Malnad Area Development Board (Amendment) Bill and the Shree Chamundeshwari Kshetra Development Authority and Certain Other Laws (Amendment) Bill.

The government, however, did not table the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle (Amendment) Bill that eases the procedure for the release of vehicles seized for illegal cattle transport, though it was listed. *—PTI*

Public opinion to be considered on Belagavi district bifurcation

The State government appears keen to bifurcate or trifurcate Belagavi district, despite the border dispute issue with Maharashtra still pending in the Supreme Court and various Kannada organisations warning against such a move. Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda informed the Legislative Assembly that the government would begin collecting public opinion declaring Chikkodi and Gokak as new districts, following which action will be taken.

Need police subdivision in Malur, says MLC Nanje Gowda

Congress Legislator from Malur in Kolar district KY Nanje Gowda urged the State Government to set up a new Police Sub division for Malur. Taking part in the Legislative debate, Nanje Gowda urged the State Government to set up a separate Sub Division for Malur. Home Minister G Parameshwara said that if the number of police stations increased in the taluk, the government could set up a police sub-division. However, there weren't enough now.

Cabinet will discuss Chinnaswammy hosting IPL on Thurs

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Wednesday said a decision on allowing IPL matches at Chinnaswamy Stadium would be taken after discussion in Thursday's Cabinet meeting. "We have no intention of stopping cricket matches at Chinnaswamy Stadium, but we have to think of crowd control measures," Shivakumar said after meeting the new President of the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA), Venkatesh Prasad.

Ban Bajrang Dal for involvement in crimes: Cong MLC Hariprasad

Congress MLC B K Hariprasad has demanded a ban on Bajrang Dal, claiming that they were involved in many crimes. He asked the Chief Minister to fulfil this demand because this was part of the Congress election manifesto. "One of our Congress workers, Ganesh Gowda, was killed in the Chikkamagaluru district. He was killed by the Bajrang Dal activists. Bajrang Dal activists were involved in so many murder cases," Hariprasad claimed.

Lingayat protesters detained during march

BELAGAVI, 10 DEC

Members of the Lingayat Panchamasali community on Wednesday observed a 'Panchamasali Atrocity Day', marking one year since police lathi-charge during an agitation seeking 2A reservation. The community held a silent march to condemn the incident and reiterate their demand.

The protest rally began at Mahatma Gandhi Bhavan in Belagavi and moved through Rani Chennamma Circle and the Deputy Commissioner's office before heading towards Sangolli Rayanna Circle. Thousands of protesters took part in the silent march, wearing black armbands and carrying Panchamasali flags as they demanded justice and reservation under Category 2A.

As the march proceeded towards Suvarna Soudha, police detained several prominent leaders, later releasing them.

Those detained included Kudalasangama Panchamasali Peetha seer Sri Basavajaya Mrutyunjaya Swamiji, and BJP MLA Aravind Bellad and ex-BJP MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal among others. *—Salar News*

Lingayats, including ex-BJP MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal, marched to the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha on Wednesday *PHOTO: X @BASANAGOUDABJP*

FARMER COLLAPSES DURING PROTEST, HOSPITALISED IN BELAGAVI

BELAGAVI, 10 DEC

A farmer participating in an ongoing protest at the Suvarna Garden premises suddenly fell ill on Wednesday morning. Yallappa Hirekurabar, 35, a resident of Kudachi village in Raibag taluk, was among the protesters demanding the fulfilment of various pending demands.

The farmer experienced a sudden spike or drop in blood pressure, likely triggered by the heavy crowd, prolonged sloganeering, and the overall stress at the protest site, eyewitness said. He became dizzy and collapsed. Medical personnel present at the venue immediately administered first aid and shifted him to the Belagavi District Hospital.

The incident caused brief anxiety and confusion among the protesters, but the situation was soon brought under control. Fellow farmers, organisers, and police officials extended timely assistance.

Protest leaders said the agitation has intensified due to the government's delay in addressing the farmers' demands, resulting in heightened mental and physical strain on the participants. Hospital sources later confirmed that Yallappa Hirekurabar's condition is now stable. *—Salar News*

Man held for raping Class 9 girl in Yadgir

YADGIR, 10 DEC

A POCSO case has been registered at the Kembhavi police station against a married man for allegedly raping a 15-year-old girl from a village in Surapura taluk.

Police said that a case under BNS Section 65(1), 351(2) and POCSO was registered against Shivappa, a neighbour of the girl.

The girl's parents had gone to Bengaluru and were working as labourers there. The girl, who is studying in class 9, had gone to Bengaluru to stay with her parents a few months ago. She returned to her hometown to go to school.

Seeing that the girl was alone at home, Shivappa barged into her house at night and raped her. He raped the girl twice and also warned her against telling her parents, they said.

The girl, who had gone to Bengaluru again to visit her parents last month, developed a fever. When she was taken to a hospital, it was found that she was two months pregnant. Police said that when the girl was questioned, she told her parents that Shivappa had raped her and had threatened her. *—Salar News*

Menstrual leave soon for students?

SHIVAMOGGA, 10 DEC

The Karnataka government, which recently granted one day of paid menstrual leave per month to all working women, is now planning to introduce the Karnataka Working Women Wellbeing Bill, 2025, which will extend the benefit to menstruating students and transgender persons, official sources said.

The bill aims to provide benefits to menstruating individuals engaged in educational institutions, private establishments, and services under the aegis of the government.

According to the draft, a "menstruating person" includes girls, women, and transgender persons.

Sources said the bill may be tabled during the ongoing Assembly session, subject to Cabinet approval.

Under the proposed legislation, every menstruating person is entitled to one day of paid leave per month in any government or private establishment covered under the act.

For students, leave of absence will be up to two days per month, along with a 2 per cent relaxation in attendance for menstrual-related issues. The total number of menstrual leave days will not exceed twelve days in a calendar year. The draft bill also allows menstruating persons to work from home if they do not wish to avail of the leave, provided the facility is available.

The legislation proposes the constitution of the Karnataka Women Wellbeing Authority to implement its provisions.

The chairperson of the Karnataka State Commission for Women will serve as the ex-officio chairperson of the authority.

The draft also prescribes penalties for violations. Anyone who intentionally denies menstrual leave, discriminates against a menstruating person, or treats them as untouchable may be liable to pay a fine of up to Rs 5,000 per contravention, sources said.

The government last month issued an order mandating one day of paid menstrual leave per month for working women permanent, contractual, and outsourced roles. It extended it to all government workers on 2 Dec. *—PTI*

CM asks PM for help to establish Q-MINt in City

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking the Centre's support to establish a Quantum Materials Innovation Network (Q-MINt) in Bengaluru, positioning the state as a central pillar of India's National Quantum Mission.

In his letter, Siddaramaiah highlighted Karnataka's initiative to establish a "Quantum City" in Bengaluru, an integrated hub to drive the sustainable development of quantum technologies.

"With support under the National Quantum Mission for dedicated material infrastructure and collaborative education-skill-research networks, Q-MINt can become a cornerstone of India's Quantum Era, strengthening technological sovereignty and creating long-term economic impact," the Chief Minister wrote on X.

The proposed Q-MINt programme seeks a capital investment of approximately Rs 150 crore under the NQM to establish local and distributed materials infrastructure, the letter said. *—ANI*

Alok Kumar is DGP Prisons

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

The government transfered Alok Kumar, IPS, from the post of Additional Director General of Police, Training, Bengaluru to the Director General of Police of Prisons and Correctional Services. He will take the post immediately on 12 December, 2025.

Meanwhile, B Dayananda, IPS, was transferred from the post of Additional Director General of Police, Prisons and Correctional Services, Bengaluru to Additional Director General of Police, Training, Bengaluru. Notably, the post of Director General of Police, Prisons and CorrectionalServices, Bengaluru is declared equivalent in status and responsibilities to the cadre post of Director General of Police Criminal Investigation Department under rule 12 of IPS (Pay) Rules, 2016.

Similarly, the notification said that the post of Additional Director General of Police, Training, Bengaluru is declared equivalent in status and responsibilities to the cadre post of Additional Director General of Police Administration.

—Salar News

10 Bangladeshis get 2 year jail for illegal stay

UDUPI, 10 DEC

Ten Bangladeshi nationals have been sentenced to two years' imprisonment and fined Rs 10,000 each for illegally entering and residing in Udupi. The Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court passed the sentence on 8 December, under the jurisdiction of Malpe police station. The case came to light on the evening of 11 October, 2024. *—PTI*

1 BEAR RESCUED

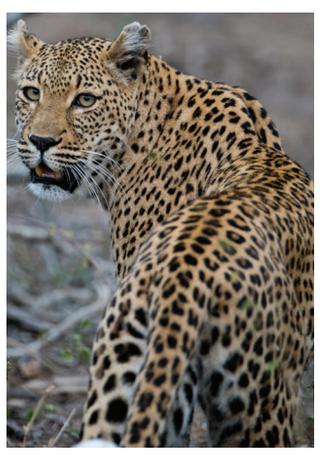
Poachers' traps kill 2 leopards in Shivamogga

SHIVAMOGGA, 10 DEC

Two leopards died in Shivamogga after getting caught in snares laid illegally by poachers and possibly, villagers. A bear was rescued in a separate incident.

Wildlife activists have criticised the Forest Department for failing to curb recurring deaths caused by traps.

In Bhadravati, a leopard caught in a snare died on Monday at the Tyavarekoppa Lion and Tiger Safari. The three-and-a-half-year-old animal was found with the snare tightened around its waist and legs. It was rescued and moved to Shivamogga for treatment, but did not survive.



In another incident, a leopard was found dead in a decomposed state on Sunday near Talagunda in the Shiralakoppa range.

Forest staff suspect the animal may have died two days earlier due to a snare at a private farmland.

Poachers set up snares to hunt wild boar and deer, but leopards and bears have increasingly become victims in Shivamogga. Over the past seven months, 11 bears and four leopards have been trapped.

Of these, three bears and two leopards have died.

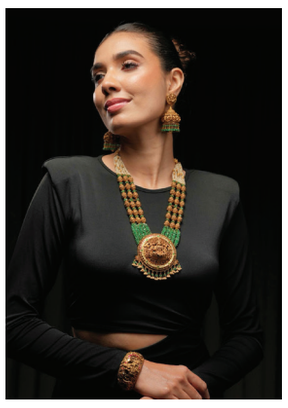
"Most traps are being set on private lands. Landowners deny involvement, and when attempts are made to hold them accountable, political pressure follows," a forest official said.

Wildlife activist Parameshwarayya Chittaguppe said: "Forest officials must hold landowners responsible and file FIRs wherever traps are found."

Forest officials have been directed to carry out combing operations and create awareness among villagers about the punishment for using snares. *—Salar News*

BENGALURU'S MOST AWAITED 'ASIA JEWELS SHOW 2025' IS HERE

Asia Jewels Show 2025, one of South India's most glamorous jewellery exhibition & sale, is hosting its 61st edition in Bengaluru City at Hotel Shangri-La, Palace Road, from 12-14 December 2025. Time is from 10.30am to 8pm. For the first time, the expo will showcase never seen before jewellery designs from top hand-picked jewellers from across India. It will be done by eminent personalities on 12 December at 12 noon.



Gajraj Jewellers (Bengaluru), Nikhaar Jewels (Bengaluru),Varaa Shree Jewels (Bengaluru) , (Bengaluru), Vitrag Jewels (Bengaluru), Shrihari Diagems By Anirudh (Delhi), Madanji Meghraj Jewellers (Bengaluru), Ortus Studio (Bengaluru),BNR Gold & Diamonds (Bengaluru), Swarna Mantra (Bengaluru), Essence Jewels (Hyd), Diamorn (Mumbai), Sehgal Jewellers (Delhi), Shrians Jewels (Bengaluru), Zewar by Valchandson (Mumbai), MK Jewels (Mumbai), FZ Gems (Jaipur), SKT Gold & Diamonds (Hyd), Proffini Fine Jewels (Mumbai), Panna Jewellers (Hyd), Style Aura (Bengaluru),The Velli Shop (Chennai), Saroki Jewels (Bengaluru), Glow Kirtilal (Bengaluru), Sam Mohan Silver (Hyd), Padmapriya Jewellers (Bengaluru) Ambition Jewels (Jaipur), Neelmani Jewels (Jaipur), Shelluce (Jaipur), Cosmos Jewels (Bengaluru), Ecoluxe Jewels (Mumbai), Balaji Pearls (Chennai),Neha Creation (Bengaluru) & more.

To know more about the exhibition, please call 9620461919 or email at info@hrsmedia.in or visit https://hrsmedia.in

*Advertorial

PHOTO: ANI

Voter cards found dumped in West Bengal's Nadia

KOLKATA, 10 DEC

A sack containing Elector Photo Identity Cards (EPIC) was found dumped beside National Highway 12 in Nadia district, West Bengal, police said on Wednesday. Local residents spotted the sack near a garbage dump in Shantipur and alerted authorities. The police recovered the cards and took them for verification, with an investigation now underway. A Shantipur Panchayat Samiti member and a local TMC leader alleged that BJP workers from another district deliberately discarded the cards. The BJP denied the claim, stating the area is under a TMC-run panchayat and accusing the party of using the cards for bogus voting. The discovery comes amid the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, on-going until 11 December. *—PTI*

Suspended TMC MLA says will be kingmaker

KOLKATA, 10 DEC

Suspended Trinamool Congress MLA Humayun Kabir has announced plans to form a new political party, claiming he will be a "kingmaker" in West Bengal's 2026 assembly elections. Kabir suggested that neither the TMC nor the BJP would reach the 148-seat majority on their own. He intends to contest 135 seats and launch his party on 22 December at a rally in Berhampore Textile More, expecting around 100,000 attendees. While exploring alliances with Congress and the Left, AIMIM has rejected collaboration. Kabir was suspended from the TMC following his controversial mosque foundation in Murshidabad. The TMC dismissed his claims as "daydreaming," questioning his political credibility. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Demolition of J&K scribe's house sparks outcry

JAMMU, 10 DEC

Senior CPI(M) leader and MLA MY Tarigami (in pic) has demanded an inquiry into the "selective demolition" of social media journalist Arfaz Daing's home in Jammu. The house was demolished on 27 November, by the Jammu Development Authority during an anti-encroachment drive, with the family claiming they had lived there for over 40 years and received no prior notice. Tarigami condemned the action as unilateral and inhumane, urging Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to ensure accountability, transparency, and compliance with Supreme Court directives, while calling for proper rehabilitation of the affected family. *—PTI*

Will detect, delete, deport: Shah on SIR

He warned TMC & DMK will be wiped out if they oppose SIR, asks if infiltrators can pick CMs

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

In a combative address in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, Home Minister Amit Shah strongly defended the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, declaring that the government's stance on illegal immigration was clear: "detect, delete and deport". As the Opposition staged a walkout, Shah said their boycott would have no impact. "They can boycott 200 times; not even one infiltrator will be allowed to vote."

Shah accused Opposition parties of opposing SIR because they "can no longer win elections by corrupt practices". Intervening in a debate on electoral reforms, he alleged that the campaign against SIR was aimed at retaining "avaidh ghuspathiye (illegal immigrants)" on voters' lists. "Their policy is to normalise infiltration, recognise them, add them to voter rolls during elections and formalise this," he said. "Our policy is the opposite."

The minister said the Opposition becomes defensive when history is invoked, but added that SIRs have been conducted since 1952 under successive governments. "The first SIR was in 1952 under Jawaharlal Nehru, then in 1957, 1961, during Lal Bahadur Shastri's time, then under Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Narasimha Rao and again from 2002 during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's time continuing into Manmohan Singh's tenure. No party opposed it then because it kept democracy healthy."

He warned that if the Trinamool Congress and DMK continued opposing SIR in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, they would be "wiped out" in their upcoming assembly polls.

Criticising Congress, he argued that its defeats stemmed from leadership failures, not EVMs or "vote chori". He noted that EVMs, introduced during Rajiv Gandhi's era and used in Congress victories in 2004 and 2009, were only questioned after the party's 2014 loss.

Shah asserted that BJP had lost more elections than it had won but never targeted the Election Commission. "EVMs stopped election chori—that is why they are worried," he said. "I want to say to the House and people -- can a country's democracy be safe when the prime minister and the chief minister are decided by 'ghuspathiye'," *—PTI*

Oppn MPs stage a walkout after a heated exchange between Home Minister Amit Shah and LoP Rahul Gandhi in LS on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

PARLIAMENT DAY 8 MONSOON SESSION

> Let me tell the Congress people that the Prime Minister does not hack EVMs, he hacked people's hearts
>
> -Kangana Ranaut, BJP MP

> Modi ji spends almost half of his working time outside the country... Why are they raising questions on the leader of opposition (in Lok Sabha) travelling?
>
> -Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress MP hits back at BJP its criticising Rahul Gandhi's Germany trip

> Reverting to paper ballot elections would mean going back to the days of booth capturing
>
> -Ravi Shankar Prasad, BJP leader

'Train tickets cheapest in India'

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told Lok Sabha that India's rail fares remain among the world's most affordable, with Rs 60,000 crore given as subsidy last year. Responding to a query on restoring pre-Covid senior-citizen concessions, he said Indian ticket prices are only 5–10% of those in developed country.

Darjeeling tea under threat

BJP-nominated MP Harsh Vardhan Shringla raised alarm in the Rajya Sabha over the decline of Darjeeling tea, citing rising low-quality imports, climate stress and financial strain on estates. He warned that African and Nepalese tea imports have surged 45% in 2025, diluting Darjeeling's GI brand. Production has fallen from 14.1 million kg in the 1970s to 5.1 million kg in 2024, threatening livelihoods of lakhs of workers.

TMC MPs demand white paper on funds for Bengal

TMC MPs on Wednesday protested in the Parliament complex demanding a white paper on funds allocated to West Bengal under MGNREGS and PMAY. Holding blank placards, they said Abhishek Banerjee had challenged the Centre in March 2024 to release a white paper, but the government has not responded. TMC claimed the Centre owes the state Rs 2 lakh crore, including MGNREGS arrears. Rural Development Ministry, earlier stated pending liabilities were Rs 3,082 crore when the scheme was halted in 2022.

Amit Shah counters Rahul's claim on voter chori in Haryana

Opposition Leader Rahul Gandhi dropped a "nuclear bomb" in a press conference on 5 November 2025. Rahul claimed that 501 votes had been cast from a single house in Haryana. EC has clarified that House Number 265 is no small dwelling, but rather a joint residence for multiple families. However, separate

house numbers have not been assigned to each family, so their house number is simply listed as 265.

Human rights must be everyday essentials, says RS Chairman

Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan on Wednesday called on elected representatives to ensure human rights remain "living, breathing realities" for every citizen, particularly the marginalised sections of society, as he marked the 77th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On Human Rights Day, he said the historic 1948 document "continues to stand as the bedrock of human dignity, freedom, equality and justice."

Huge uproar as US postpones visa interviews

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Thousands of H1B visa applicants in India have had their pre-scheduled interviews abruptly postponed by several months, with the delays linked to enhanced scrutiny of applicants' social-media activity and online profiles. Many received emails from US immigration authorities pushing appointments originally set for mid-December to dates as late as May 2026.

The mass rescheduling affects all applicants with interviews slated from 15 December onwards. Most are currently in India and now unable to return to their jobs in the United States until they obtain new visa stamps. Applicants reported significant postponements: those booked for 15 December were shifted to March, while 19 December appointments were moved to late May. One applicant in Chennai said his 18 December slot was cancelled after biometrics and automatically rescheduled to 30 April, 2026.

Interviews for several other visa categories are also being deferred under the new vetting norms. The total number affected remains unclear.

The US Embassy in India advised applicants not to appear at consular offices on previously allotted dates, warning they would be denied entry. "Mission India looks forward to assisting you on your new appointment date," it said.

Immigration lawyer Emily Neumann criticised the move, saying the H-1B process "feels like a maze of pitfalls", with sudden cancellations creating challenges for businesses needing staff mobility.

The postponements come amid the Trump administration's tightening of the H1B programme. Indians account for around 71 per cent of approved H1B petitions. In September, President Trump raised the visa fee to USD 1,00,000. *—PTI*

SIR camp conducted for sex workers in Kolkata

KOLKATA, 10 DEC

The West Bengal CEO's office on Wednesday organised camps in three red-light areas in Kolkata to help sex workers fill up enumeration forms as part of the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state, an official said.

These camps were set up in red-light zones in Kidderpore, Kalighat and Chetla areas in the city, he said.

The move comes a day after similar assistance camps were organised in Sonagachi, Asia's largest red-light district, in the eastern metropolis.

The camps in the three red-light areas started functioning from 11am, he said. "The special camps were held at Five Star Club on Munshiganj Road in Kidderpore, and also at 148 Kalighat Road. The two camps were closed by 12.40pm," the Election Commission official said. The camp in Chetla was being conducted at the moment, he said.

In Kidderpore, there were at least 70 sex workers, while the number is nearly 100 in Kalighat, the official told PTI, adding that there are around 60 workers in Chetla. On Tuesday, 805 sex workers in Sonagachi had thronged the assistance camps organised by the office of the CEO with anxiety writ large on their faces. *—PTI*

HOURS BEFORE HEARING

Scene from the crash; (Inset) The accused Sheikh Shahjahan *PHOTO: PTI*

Sandeshkhali key witness hurt in car crash, son killed

BARASAT, 10 DEC

Bholanath Ghosh, one of the prime witnesses in the attack on ED officials in Sandeshkhali and the connected CBI cases which implicated TMC leader Sheikh Shahjahan, was injured when a truck collided with his car in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district on Wednesday.

Ghosh's younger son, Satyajit, 32, and the driver of his car, Sahanur Molla, 27, were killed in the accident that took place on the Basanti Highway near the Boyramari petrol pump under the Nazat Police Station limits in Basirhat, officials said.

The 16-wheel truck dragged the private vehicle and dumped it into a water body adjacent to the road, the officer said. While the truck was found on the side of the highway, precariously dangling over the water body, the erring driver fled the spot.

"I was sitting next to the driver, and my son was seated behind him. The truck came and hit our car at full speed on its right side. I cannot say anything more except this wasn't an accident. I will know more once I return home and speak to the police," Ghosh told reporters.

Ghosh, accompanied by his son, had left his Sandeshkhali residence and was headed for the Basirhat sub-divisional court to appear in connection with one of the many cases that Shahjahan had filed against him. The accident took place around 8.45 am on a stretch of the road which had no CCTV cover.

Local eyewitnesses claimed that the truck, moving in the opposite direction of the car, jumped lane and rammed into the private vehicle at breakneck speed, crushed it and dragged it along until it fell into the adjacent water body. *—PTI*

Tharoor says no to Savarkar Award

T'PURAM/NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday categorically stated that he would not accept an award named after VD Savarkar, nor attend a related event.

Tharoor, in a statement here, said that he will not accept the "Veer Savarkar Award" and also won't attend the event where it will be presented in the absence of clarifications about its nature or the organisation presenting it. "It was irresponsible on the part of the organisers to announce my name without my having agreed to receive it," he added.

Earlier in the day, Congress leader K Muraleedharan told reporters in Thiruvananthapuram that no party member, including Tharoor, should accept any award in the name of Savarkar "as he had bowed before the British." Muraleedharan said that he does not believe that Tharoor will accept the award as doing so would insult the Congress party.

Tharoor told reporters: "I heard about it yesterday only. I am not going. I am not here," he said in response to a question on his participation in the ceremony. *—PTI*

PM-led panel meets on new CIC, RaGa dissents

DELHI, 10 DEC

A high-level committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi met on Wednesday to finalise appointments for the post of Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and eight Information Commissioners, with Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi submitting a dissent note over the selection process.

The meeting, held at the Prime Minister's Office and attended by Home Minister Amit Shah, lasted over 90 minutes. Sources said Gandhi sought additional details about the shortlisted candidates and questioned the criteria used for selection. Dissatisfied with the responses, he formally recorded his dissent.

The names chosen were not disclosed.

The Centre had earlier informed the Supreme Court that the panel would meet to fill the long-pending vacancies. Under Section 12(3) of the RTI Act, the selection committee comprises the prime minister, the leader of the opposition, and a Union minister nominated by the PM. The CIC currently has 30,838 pending cases and only two serving Information Commissioners, Anandi Ramalingam and Vinod Kumar Tiwari, leaving eight vacancies. The Commission became headless for the seventh time since 2014 after CIC Heeralal Samariya retired on 13 September. *—PTI*

POLL READY

AIADMK resolution lets EPS lead NDA talks

CHENNAI, 10 DEC

Amid tensions within the NDA, the AIADMK has resolved that it will have the final say in alliance decisions in Tamil Nadu, granting full authority to general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) to decide on partners, including on whether leaders such as O Panneerselvam and TTV Dhinakaran may be accommodated. The move follows Panneerselvam's meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah ahead of his 15 December deadline to rejoin the party.

At the General Council and Executive Committee meeting in Chennai, AIADMK asserted it leads the NDA in the state and endorsed its alliance with the BJP. EPS predicted a sweeping victory of 210 seats in the 2026 Assembly election, attacking the DMK government for "unfulfilled promises," including scrapping NEET, waiving education loans and providing cooking gas subsidies. He accused the DMK of announcing 10 lakh free laptops and expanding the Rs 1,000 Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thogai scheme for electoral gains.

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, right, being felicitated during the party's General Council Meeting, in Chennai *PHOTO: PTI*

The party condemned DMK's "domineering attitude", criticised corruption and law-and-order issues, and alleged it planned to rely on "fake votes," opposing the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise which could remove thousands of duplicate or ineligible voters. EPS welcomed the SIR.

The meeting, held amid the expulsion of veteran KA Sengottaiyan and ongoing calls by Panneerselvam for AIADMK unity, condoled the Karur stampede deaths at a TVK rally. AIADMK pledged to work towards making EPS chief minister again. *—PTI*

QUOTE of THE DAY

> Don't call yourself 'peaceful' unless you're capable of violence. If you aren't capable of violence, you aren't peaceful, you're harmless
>
> —SMRITI IRANI, actor, praises 'Dhurandhar'

11 Naxal with Rs 82L bounty surrender

GADCHIROLI, 10 DEC

Eleven senior Naxalites, with a combined reward of Rs 82 lakh, surrendered to Maharashtra's Director General of Police Rashmi Shukla in Gadchiroli on Wednesday. Four were in uniform during the surrender. This year alone, 112 Maoists have surrendered in Gadchiroli. Wednesday's surrenders included senior divisional and platform party committee members from Chhattisgarh, as well as area and platoon members aged 19–36. Groups of surrendering Maoists receive a collective rehabilitation reward of Rs 10 lakh. Since 2022, 146 hard-core Naxalites have laid down arms in the district. *—PTI*

Kerala cops probe boyfriend after woman found dead

KOCHI, 10 DEC

Kerala police have launched a thorough investigation into the mysterious death of 19-year-old college student Chithrapriya. She went missing from her home in Malayattoor on Saturday evening, and her decomposed body was found on Tuesday in a deserted field about one kilometre away. Several suspects, including her boyfriend, have been taken into custody for questioning. Police have completed inquest procedures, and a post-mortem will determine the cause of death. The body, initially identified based on her clothing, requires formal confirmation. An unnatural death case has been registered, following an earlier FIR by her parents. Investigators are also examining CCTV footage reportedly showing her pillion-riding on a motorbike on the day she disappeared. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

J'khand to start tiger, wildlife census on 15 Dec

MEDININAGAR, 10 DEC

Jharkhand will begin a census of tigers and other wild animals across all forest areas on 15 December, officials said. SR Natesh, Chief Conservator of Forests and Field Director of Palamu Tiger Reserve, has been appointed the state's nodal officer for the exercise. The census will be conducted digitally using the Ecological App, to be completed by 22 December, followed by manual counting in protected and general forest divisions, expected to finish by April 2026. Jharkhand has 36 forest divisions, including five wildlife divisions. About 1,600 staff and volunteers will be involved. A request of Rs 5 lakh per division has been made for funding, though the census will proceed even if funds are not granted.*—PTI*

Woman divorces man just 3 days after wedding

GORAKHPUR, 10 DEC

A newly married woman in Gorakhpur has sought divorce just three days after her wedding, alleging that her husband confessed on the wedding night that he was physically incapable of marital relations. Her family said a medical report later confirmed he "cannot become a father", prompting them to demand the return of gifts and wedding expenses. The couple married on 28 November. The bride informed her father during a customary visit, after which she was taken home. Both families later met, and a medical examination was conducted. Following a police complaint, a settlement was reached: the groom's family will return Ra 7 lakh and all gifts within a month. Sahjanwa SHO Mahesh Chaubey said the matter is being resolved mutually. *—PTI*

How can flights be so pricey? HC tears into govt

Delhi HC grills Centre for failing to check Indigo crisis

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday pulled up the Central for not taking timely action to check the Indigo crisis and asked how could airlines charge Rs 35,000-39,000 for flights.

A bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela questioned why did IndiGo not comply with Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) rules, including pilot rest norms, which were to be implemented by 1 November.

"The question is why this crisis arose at all and what you have been doing," the court said, asking the Centre and IndiGo to ensure adequate compensation for affected passengers. It also asked whether authorities were "helpless" in taking timely enforcement action when FDTL violations were known.

Union Minister of Civil Aviation Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarap with Indigo CEO Pieter Elbers during a meeting on flight disruptions *PHOTO: PTI*

Expressing concern over fare spikes, the court questioned how airlines were permitted to charge up to Rs 35,000–Rs 39,000 for tickets that usually cost around Rs 5,000. The Centre and DGCA informed the court that statutory mechanisms were in place and that a show-cause notice had already been issued to IndiGo, which apologised.

Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma said the crisis was precipitated by various non-compliances, including crew duty-hour rules.

The bench, however, pressed the authorities on what punitive provisions they could have invoked earlier. The court directed IndiGo to immediately compensate passengers not only for cancellations but also for the hardship faced, including hostile staff behaviour and extended delays.

The bench sought an update on the ongoing inquiry into the disruptions and directed that, if completed, the report be submitted in a sealed cover by 22 January. It further asked the Centre why delayed implementation of FDTL rules should not be considered a compromise of passenger safety.

The court was hearing a PIL seeking compensation, refunds and a judicial inquiry into the cancellations. *– PTI*

Woman dies as 2 quacks conduct surgery watching YouTube video

BARABANKI, 10 DEC

A woman died after the owner of an illegal clinic and his nephew allegedly performed a surgery on her by watching a YouTube video, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in the Kothi area, where the duo was running an illegal clinic.

Police said Munishra Rawat, the wife of Tehbahadur Rawat, was suffering from a stone-related ailment. On 5 December, her husband took her to Shri Damodar Aushdhalaya in Kothi, where clinic operator Gyan Prakash Mishra allegedly told him that the pain in her abdomen was due to stones and advised an operation, estimating the cost at Rs 25,000. Before the surgery, the husband deposited Rs 20,000, police said.

Tehbahadur alleged that Mishra, described as a 'quack', was drunk and started the procedure after watching a YouTube video.

The victim Munishra Rawat and the accused Gyan Prakash Mishra and his nephew who performed the surgery *PHOTO: ANI*

- Clinic operator Gyan Prakash Mishra allegedly said Munishra Rawat's pain in her abdomen was due to stones and advised an operation, estimating the cost at Rs 25,000.

He said that Mishra made a deep incision on his wife's abdomen, cutting several veins, following which she died on 6 December. Mishra's nephew assisted him.

Kothi SHO Amit Singh Bhadoriya said a case has been registered against the clinic operator and his nephew for causing death by negligence, and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

Efforts are on to arrest the duo, who are absconding, he said. *— PTI*

As Delhi chokes, CM plans grand celebration

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

As Delhi continued to battle severe pollution, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday announced grand celebrations to mark Deepavali's inclusion in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. She called the recognition a historic endorsement of India's civilisational values. The city will host a special 'Bhavya Deepavali' this year to commemorate the achievement, she added.

Gupta said Deepavali was "not merely a festival, but a spiritual illumination that has guided humanity for centuries along the path of truth, hope and morality".

Delhi's air quality barely improved. The city recording Air Quality Index (AQI) of 267 at 9am, according to Central Pollution Control Board. The AQI stood at 291 on Tuesday and 318 on Monday. An AQI between 201 and 300 falls in the "poor" category, while 301 to 400 is "very poor". *—PTI*

AFTER 25 DEATHS

I am only a partner: Arrested owner of Goa club

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Ajay Gupta, one of the co-owners of Goa's 'Birch by Romeo Lane' nightclub, said he is "only a partner" as he was brought to Delhi's Anti-Extortion and Kidnapping Cell on Wednesday in connection with the blaze that killed 25 people. Gupta, masked and covering most of his face, made the brief remark while entering the Crime Branch office at Sunlight Colony. He was later taken to LNJP Hospital for medical tests and will be produced before the Saket court for transit remand.

Sources said Gupta had been questioned by Goa Police, who initiated formal procedures to apprehend him after he allegedly evaded investigators following the 6 December fire in Arpora. A Look Out Circular had been issued after officers. He was eventually located at a private hospital in Lajpat Nagar, where he had reportedly admitted himself for spine-related issues.

Gupta is likely to be arrested once Goa Police completes the transit remand process. Five staff members of the nightclub — chief general manager Rajiv Modak, general manager Vivek Singh, bar manager Rajiv Singhania, gate manager Riyanshu Thakur and employee Bharat Kohli — are arrested. Meanwhile, co-owner brothers Saurabh and Gaurav Luthra left India soon after the incident. An Interpol Blue Corner Notice has been issued against them. *—PTI*

Goa tourist hubs under scanner ahead of NY

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Wednesday warned that tourist establishments failing to meet fire safety norms will have their licences cancelled and premises sealed. After a high-level meeting with district officials, police and tourism stakeholders ahead of Christmas and New Year, he said the fire safety audit committee has begun inspections and will file a report. Sawant said all rules must be followed to prevent accidents. Safety measures will be enforced for water and adventure sports, and stakeholders have been told to ensure there are no altercations between staff and tourists. *—PTI*

Ex-judges call out 'motivated campaign' against CJI

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

A group of 44 former Supreme Court and high court judges on Wednesday criticised what they called a "motivated campaign" targeting Chief Justice of India Surya Kant over his recent remarks on Rohingya refugees during a hearing.

In a statement titled 'Disparagement of the Supreme Court is Unacceptable', they said attempts were being made to malign the judiciary and attribute political motives to the CJI.

They warned that the current backlash was an effort to delegitimise the court by "mis-characterising a routine courtroom proceeding as an act of prejudice".

They added that critics had ignored the Bench's clarification that no person on Indian soil, citizen or foreigner, can be subjected to torture, disappearance or inhuman treatment.

On 2 December, a Bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi while hearing a habeas corpus plea by activist Rita Manchanda alleging the disappearance of Rohingyas from official custody, asking, "If they do not have legal status to stay in India… what is the problem in sending them back?" *—PTI*

2020 DELHI RIOTS

SC reserves order on bail pleas of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its verdict on bail pleas of activists Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam and others in the UAPA case related to the alleged conspiracy behind the February 2020 riots in Delhi.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria heard arguments from Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, Additional Solicitor General S V Raju and senior advocates Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Singhvi, Siddhartha Dave, Salman Khurshid and Sidharth Luthra.

Strongly opposing the bail pleas of activist Umar, Sharjeel and others, the Delhi Police had said the February 2020 riots were not something spontaneous, but an "orchestrated, pre-planned and well-designed" attack on India's sovereignty.

Activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam *PHOTO: PTI*

Umar, Sharjeel and other accused were booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) anti-terror law and provisions of the erstwhile IPC for allegedly being the "masterminds" of the 2020 riots, which left 53 people dead and over 700 injured.

The violence erupted during widespread protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

The accused have moved the apex court challenging the Delhi High Court's September 2 order denying them bail in the "larger conspiracy" case of the February 2020 riots. *—PTI*

Rape-accused Mamkootathil gets anticipatory bail

T'PURAM, 10 DEC

A court here on Wednesday granted anticipatory bail to expelled Congress MLA Rahul Mamkootathil in a second case of sexual assault against him.

The MLA's lawyer, advocate Ajithkumar (Sastha mangalam), confirmed the grant of relief to the legislator by the sessions court here.

Mamkootathil had already got an interim protection from arrest from Kerala High Court in the first case of sexual assault. The Palakkad MLA was expelled from the party on 4 December following a second rape complaint and rejection of anticipatory bail pleas by a sessions court. *—PTI*

Infant dies after being crushed between parents

AMROHA, 10 DEC

A newborn died after being crushed between his sleeping parents in the Gajraula area here, police and family members said on Wednesday.

The infant, Sufian, was born on 10 November and was the only child of Saddam Abbasi, 25, and his wife, Asma. The incident occurred on Saturday when the couple placed him between them on the bed.

According to family members, both parents unknowingly changed sides during the night, causing the 26-day-old baby to get trapped between them.

On Sunday morning, Asma woke up to feed the baby and found him unresponsive. Saddam rushed him to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

Relatives said the baby had been weak since birth and suffered from breathing problems and jaundice.

Doctors at the health centre said the newborn died due to suffocation. No police complaint has been filed in the matter, officials said. *—PTI*

SC: ICC can hear POSH plaint of different dept

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Supreme Court held on Wednesday that the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) formed in one department can entertain a complaint of sexual harassment under the POSH Act against an employee of a different department.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi said a narrow interpretation of the provisions of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act would undermine its remedial social welfare intent since it would create significant practical hurdles for the aggrieved woman.

"The aggrieved woman, who has allegedly suffered an act of sexual harassment, would be compelled to file a complaint before the ICC constituted at the workplace of the 'respondent'. It would create a situation where the aggrieved woman would have to appear before the ICC at an alien workplace in order to pursue her remedy in law," the bench said.

The top court said in case the ICC constituted at the aggrieved woman's workplace is conducting a fact-finding inquiry under the POSH Act, the employer of the accused, even if it is a different department, must abide by its duties under section 19(f) of the POSH Act and swiftly cooperate and make available information upon a request by the ICC formed at the aggrieved woman's workplace.

The judgment came on a plea filed by a 2010-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, challenging a notice issued by the ICC. He was accused of sexual harassment. *—PTI*

NIGHTMARE IN GUWAHATI

Foreigners harassed at Post Malone concert

GUWAHATI, 10 DEC

Two foreign women have alleged that they were harassed and "touched without consent" during American rapper Post Malone's debut Indian concert in Guwahati, held on Monday at the Veterinary College Playground in Khanapara. The incident was highlighted by one of them, Emma, a travel vlogger, in an Instagram post, where she claimed she and her friend were subjected to inappropriate touching within minutes of entering the packed crowd of over 20,000 attendees.

Emma said they were forced to leave the front area within 10 minutes and move towards the back as they "no longer felt safe". She described the behaviour as part of a wider issue of violence against women and not merely crowd pushing. However, she added that the episode should not define Guwahati, stating they had otherwise experienced kindness and hospitality in the city.

Emma, a travel vlogger, said she and her friend were touched inappropriately within minutes of entering the packed venue *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

- Police said no formal complaint has been filed but confirmed the matter is being examined. Police asked why the women did not alert the police at the venue

"No concert should make women choose between enjoying music and guarding their bodies," she wrote.

Guwahati Police said no formal complaint has been filed but confirmed the matter is being examined. Deputy Commissioner (East) Mrinal Deka questioned why the women did not alert the large police presence at the venue at the time, adding that the force is "taking the matter seriously" and looking into all aspects raised in the social media post. *—PTI*

SHORT-FORM VIDEOS ARE HARMING YOUNG MINDS

Online short-form video has shifted from a light distraction to a constant backdrop in many children's lives. What used to fill a spare moment now shapes how young people relax, communicate and form opinions, with TikTok, Instagram Reels, Douyin and YouTube Shorts drawing in hundreds of millions of under-18s through endlessly personalised feeds.

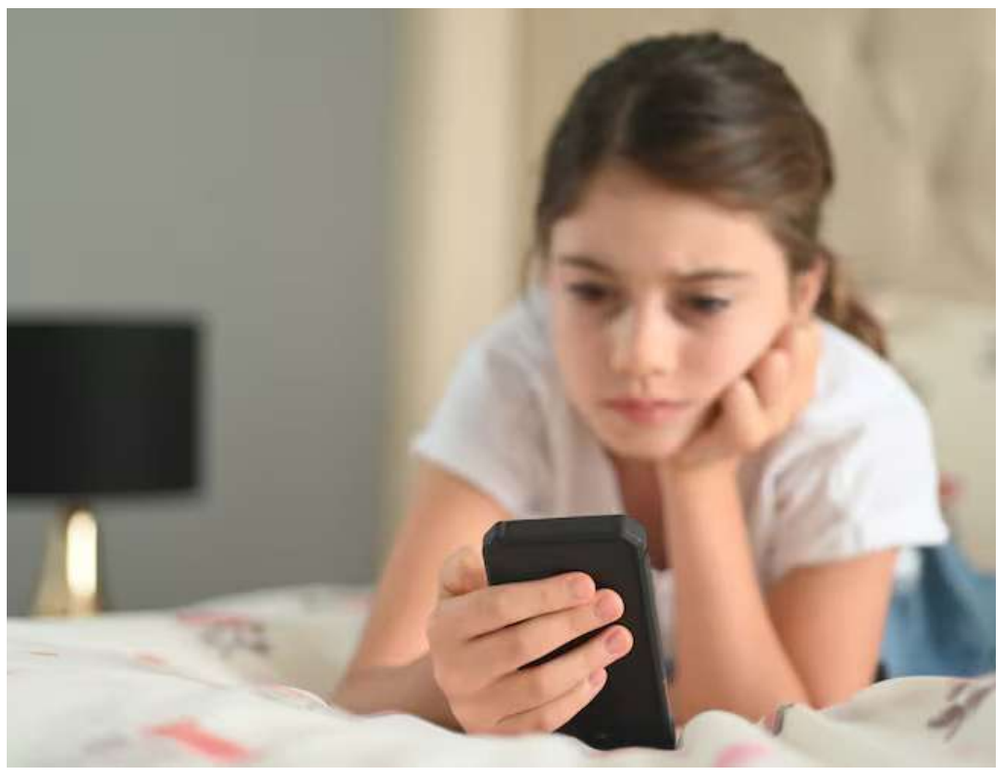
These apps feel lively and intimate, offering quick routes to humour, trends and connection, yet their design encourages long sessions of rapid scrolling that can be difficult for young users to manage. They were never built with children in mind, although many children use them daily and often alone.

For some pre-teens, these platforms help develop identity, spark interests and maintain friendships. For others, the flow of content disrupts sleep, erodes boundaries or squeezes out time for reflection and meaningful interaction.

Problematic use is less about minutes spent and more about patterns where scrolling becomes compulsive or hard to stop. These patterns can begin to affect sleep, mood, attention, schoolwork and relationships.

Short-form videos (typically between 15 and 90 seconds) are engineered to capture the brain's craving for novelty. Each swipe promises something different, whether a joke, prank or shock – and the reward system responds instantly.

Because the feed rarely pauses, the natural breaks that help attention reset vanish. Over time, this can weaken impulse control and sustained focus. A 2023 analysis of 71 studies and nearly 100,000 participants found a moderate link between heavy short-form video use and reduced inhibitory control and attention spans.



Short-form videos (typically between 15 and 90 seconds) are engineered to capture the brain's craving for novelty
PHOTO: PIXABAY

PHOTO: FREEPIK

ATTENTION HIJACKED

Sleep is one of the clearest areas where short-form video can take a toll.

Many children today view screens when they should be winding down. The bright light delays the release of melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep, making it harder for them to drift off.

But the emotional highs and lows of rapid content make it particularly difficult for the brain to settle. A recent study found that for some teenagers, excessive short-form video use is connected to poorer sleep and higher social anxiety.

These sleep disturbances affect mood, resilience and memory, and can create a cycle that is especially hard for stressed or socially pressured children to break.

Beyond sleep, the constant stream of peer images and curated lifestyles can amplify comparison. Pre-teens may internalise unrealistic standards of popularity, appearance or success, which is linked to lower self-esteem and anxiety – although the same is true for all forms of social media.

YOUNGER CHILDREN ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE

Most research focuses on teenagers, but younger children have less mature self-regulation and a more fragile sense of identity, leaving them highly susceptible to the emotional pull of quick-fire content.

Exposure to material children never intended to see adds risk and the design of short-form video apps can make this far more likely. Because clips appear instantly and autoplay one after another, children can be shown violent footage, harmful challenges or sexual content before they have time to process what they are seeing or look away.

Unlike longer videos or traditional social media posts, short-form content provides almost no context, no warning, and no opportunity to prepare emotionally. A single swipe can produce a sudden shift in tone from silly to disturbing, which is particularly jarring for developing brains.

Although this content may not always be illegal, it can still be inappropriate for a child's stage of development. Algorithmic systems learn from a brief moment of exposure, sometimes escalating similar content into the feed. This combination of instant appearance, lack of context, emotional intensity and rapid reinforcement is what makes inappropriate content in short-form video especially problematic for younger users.

Not every child is affected in the same way, though. Those with anxiety, attention difficulties or emotional volatility seem more vulnerable to compulsive scrolling and to the mood swings that follow it.

Some research suggests a cyclical relationship, where young people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, are particularly drawn to rapid content, while heavy use may intensify the symptoms that make self-regulation difficult. Children dealing with bullying, stress, family instability or poor sleep may also use late-night scrolling to cope with difficult emotions.

This matters because childhood is a critical period for learning how to build relationships, tolerate boredom and handle uncomfortable feelings. When every quiet moment is filled with quick entertainment, children lose chances to practise daydreaming, invent games, chat with family or simply let their thoughts wander.

Unstructured time is part of how young minds learn to soothe themselves and develop internal focus. Without it, these skills can weaken.

NEW GUIDELINES

There are encouraging signs of change as governments and schools begin to address digital wellbeing more explicitly. In England, new statutory guidelines encourage schools to integrate online safety and digital literacy into the curriculum.

Some schools are restricting smartphone use during the school day, and organisations such as Amnesty International are urging platforms to introduce safer defaults, better age-verification and greater transparency around algorithms.

At home, open conversation can help children understand their habits and build healthier ones. Parents can watch videos together, discuss what makes certain clips appealing and explore how particular content made the child feel.

Establishing simple family routines, such as keeping devices out of bedrooms or setting a shared cut-off time for screen use, can protect sleep and reduce late-night scrolling. Encouraging offline activities, hobbies, sports and time with friends also helps maintain a healthy balance.

Short-form videos can be creative, funny and comforting. With thoughtful support, responsive policies and safer platform design, children can enjoy them without compromising their wellbeing or development. —PTI

SALAR

S Korea mandates labels on AI-generated ads

South Korea will require advertisers to label their ads made with artificial intelligence technologies from next year as it seeks to curb a surge of deceptive promotions featuring fabricated experts or deep-faked celebrities endorsing food or pharmaceutical products on social media.

Following a policy meeting chaired by Prime Minister Kim Min-seok on Wednesday, officials said they will ramp up screening and removal of problematic AI-generated ads and impose punitive fines, citing growing risks to consumers — especially older people who struggle to tell whether content is AI-made.

Lee Dong-hoon, director of economic and financial policy at the Office for Government Policy Coordination, said in a briefing that such ads are "disrupting the market order," and that "swift action is now essential."

"Anyone who creates, edits, and posts AI-generated photos or videos will be required to label them as AI-made, and the users of the platform will be prohibited from removing or tampering with those labels," he said.

AI-generated ads using digitally fabricated experts or deepfake videos and audios of celebrities, promoting everything from weight-loss pills and cosmetics to illegal gambling sites, have become staples across the South Korean spaces of YouTube, Facebook and other social media platforms.

The government will seek to revise the telecommunications act and other related laws so the AI-labelling requirement, along with strengthened monitoring and punitive measures, can take effect in early 2026. Companies operating the platforms will also be responsible for ensuring that advertisers comply with the labelling rules, Lee said.

AI fuels surge in false ads

Officials say it's becoming increasingly difficult to monitor and detect the growing number of false ads fuelled by AI. South Korea's Food and Drug Safety Ministry identified more than 96,700 illegal online ads of food and pharmaceutical products in 2024 and 68,950 through September this year, up from around 59,000 in 2023.

The problem is also spreading into areas such as private education, cosmetics and illegal gambling services, leaving the Korea Consumer Agency and other watchdogs struggling to keep pace, the Government Policy Coordination Office said.

Beyond deceptive ads and misinformation, South Korea is also grappling with sexual abuse enabled by AI and other digital technologies. A Seoul court last month sentenced a 33-year-old man to life in prison for running an online blackmail ring that sexually exploited or abused more than 200 victims, including many minors who were threatened with deepfakes and other manipulated sexual images and videos.

Officials plan to raise fines and also introduce punitive penalties next year to discourage the creation of false AI-generated ads, saying those who knowingly distribute false or fabricated information online or through other telecommunications networks could be held liable for damages up to five times the losses incurred.

Officials will also strengthen monitoring and faster takedown procedures, including enabling reviews within 24 hours and introducing an emergency process to block harmful ads even before deliberation is complete. They also plan to bolster the monitoring capabilities of the Food and Drug Safety Ministry and the Korea Consumer Agency — using AI, of course.

Despite risks, South Korea's love for AI grows

Prime Minister Kim, Seoul's No 2 official behind President Lee Jae Myung, said during the policy meeting that it's crucial to "minimize the side effects of new technologies" as the country embraces the "AI era."

The plans to label AI-generated ads were announced as Lee, in a separate meeting with business leaders, reiterated his government's ambitions for AI, pledging national efforts to strengthen South Korea's capabilities in advanced computer chips that power the global AI race.

Government plans include more research and development spending on AI-specific chips and other advanced semiconductor products as well as expanding the country's chip manufacturing hubs beyond metropolitan areas near the capital city of Seoul to the southern regions. South Korean chipmakers, including Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix, combined for more than 65% of the global memory chip market last year.

The science and telecommunications ministry also said Wednesday it will require the country's wireless carriers to transition to 5G standalone networks, which are seen as optimal for advanced AI applications because of their higher bandwidth and lower latency, as a condition for renewing their 3G and LTE licenses. —PTI

On 2 July 2025, H&M released its first-ever campaign featuring AI-created digital models. Around the same time, Italian luxury fashion house Valentino faced backlash for posting what many online users described as 'disturbing' AI-generated advertisements for its DeVain luxury handbag
PHOTO:SCREENGRABS

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Australia's social media ban on under 16s won't stop cyberbullying

The Australian Federal government's Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act, commonly referred to as the "social media ban", is now in effect.

In the months leading up to the ban, there have been a lot of stories about what will actually happen once the legislation is active, and many people believe the ban will prevent cyberbullying. It won't – because bullying is a social problem, which can't be solved with a quick technical fix.

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The ban requires that social media platforms take reasonable steps to prevent Australians under the age of 16 from having an account on those platforms.

The platforms definitely included in the ban are Facebook, Instagram, Threads, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitch, X (née Twitter) and YouTube.

This list is dynamic and will likely change and grow over time.

Some platforms are, initially at least, definitely not subject to the ban, including Discord, GitHub, Google Classroom, LEGO Play, Messenger, Pinterest, Roblox, Steam and Steam Chat, WhatsApp and YouTube Kids.

WHAT ISN'T HAPPENING?

There are a lot of myths and misunderstandings circulating about the ban.

Some people have the impression the ban is a broad piece of legislation to prevent any online harms children and young people might encounter. It isn't.

Rather, this legislation narrowly targets social media platforms, and can only prevent teens and young people from having an account on those platforms.

Despite recent concerns raised about the gaming platform Roblox, for example, it is not subject to the ban as its primary purpose is gaming, not social media.

Similarly, while teens may not be able to have accounts on these platforms, they may still be able to access content on many of them.

On YouTube, for example, under-16s can still watch public YouTube videos. They just can't subscribe to channels, like videos or leave comments.

Despite recent concerns raised about the gaming platform Roblox, for example, it is not subject to the ban as its primary purpose is gaming, not social media.

PHOTO: PIXBAY

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying – or bullying that extends into online spaces and platforms – is a significant issue for young Australians.

A 2021 report found that more than one third of Australian young people had experienced bullying online within a six-month period.

Many teens, parents and trusted adults hope the ban will prevent cyberbullying.

Some of the most recognisable faces and loudest voices promoting the ban are bereaved parents who believe their children were cyberbullied to the point of suicide.

That is incredibly tragic, and any parent in that situation would understandably be pushing for change so no one else has that awful experience.

Unfortunately, the social media ban will not stop cyberbullying.

In fact, it may not reduce cyberbullying significantly at all.

While under-16s won't have Snapchat and Instagram accounts, they will still have access to messaging platforms such as WhatsApp, Messenger, Discord and others.

It would be naive to believe that bullying activity will not simply shift from one platform to another.

The shift might make cyberbullying worse in some ways, as bullying on more closed messaging platforms may be less visible to others.

BULLYING IS NEVER (JUST) A TECH PROBLEM

It can be reassuring to think of bullying as somehow just a social media or online problem. While cyberbullying extends the abuse of bullying into homes and bedrooms, platforms don't actually bully. People do. And often those people are peers, colleagues and classmates, and much less often strangers.

In some ways the term cyberbullying itself is unhelpful. It puts focus on the "cyber" component, when the bullying is actually the problem.

Bullying is widespread in Australian schools and well beyond.

DEALING WITH CYBERBULLYING

If you or a young person you know is facing cyberbullying, there is plenty of guidance available.

Youth mental health service Reachout offers very clear advice for young Australians on how to deal with cyberbullying.

Strategies include slowing down before young people respond to bullying content, taking the space to calm down before doing anything, keeping screenshots and evidence, trying not to check for new messages or content too often, and blocking or reporting those doing the bullying.

For parents and trusted adults supporting young people dealing with bullying, the eSafety Commissioner's website also provides clear, actionable advice.

Indeed, having the support of at least one trusted adult is a key part in helping young people navigate and cope with experiences of cyberbullying.

The social media ban is a fairly blunt tool, and does not have the complexity needed to directly address or necessarily even reduce cyberbullying.

However, if the ban allows Australian families to continue, or even begin, conversations about young people's experiences online, then that's of real value to young Australians.

For parents and trusted adults, keeping that conversation going is vital. An open door to a trusted adult is key to supporting young people, no matter what they experience online. For under-16s, they should keep in mind that they have not broken the law if they get around the ban. The onus is entirely on platforms to prevent under 16s having accounts. —PTI

19 killed in building collapse in Morocco's Fes

FES, 10 DEC

Two four-storey buildings collapsed overnight in the Moroccan city of Fes, killing 19 people in the second collapse there this year, authorities said on Wednesday. Morocco's state news agency reported that the two buildings housed eight families. Sixteen people were injured and sent for treatment at a nearby hospital. Authorities said the neighbourhood had been evacuated, and search and rescue were on. It was unclear what caused the collapse or how many people were unaccounted for in the morning. Fes is Morocco's second-largest city and one of the hosts of this month's Africa Cup of Nations and the 2030 FIFA World Cup. *—PTI*

Two Bangladesh govt advisers quit before elections

DHAKA, 10 DEC

Two student leaders turned advisers in Bangladesh's interim government, Mahfuj Alam and Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiyan, resigned on Wednesday ahead of the Election Commission's announcement of the February poll schedule. Their departures follow the EC's directive that no adviser may contest elections while holding a government post. Both had been appointed as representatives of Students against Discrimination (SAD), the group behind the August 2024, protests that ousted former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Alam and Bhuiyan headed the Ministries of Information & Broadcasting and Local Government, respectively. A third SAD leader, Nahid Islam, quit earlier to form the National Citizen Party (NCP). While Bhuiyan indicated his resignation was to contest elections, Alam has not publicly disclosed his plans. *—PTI*

Dozens killed in Haiti gang clashes

SAN JUAN, 10 DEC

Violent clashes within a major gang coalition in Port-au-Prince have left dozens dead, including ten children, according to a local human rights group. Among the victims is Dèdè, a senior gang figure in Bel-Air, who was beheaded. Influential gang leader Kempès Sanon, part of the Viv Ansanm coalition, was injured and has been temporarily replaced. At least 49 people have been killed since Monday, including civilians and women seeking medical help for wounded gang members. The violence comes despite the 2023 formation of Viv Ansanm, which had briefly reduced inter-gang conflict. Fighting has trapped civilians in their homes amid rising hunger and growing concern about further instability ahead of Haiti's planned elections next year. *—PTI*

Myanmar critics stage silent strike over elections

NAYPYIDAW, 10 DEC

Opponents of Myanmar's military staged a protest on Wednesday, urging people to stay indoors to boycott elections later this month. Despite harsh legal risks, ten pro-democracy activists face charges for a rare street protest in Mandalay, where they distributed leaflets calling for rejection of the polls, abolition of conscription, and release of political prisoners. Critics say the Dec 28, elections aim to legitimise military rule after the 2021 coup. The General Strike Coordination Body called a "silent strike" from 10am to 3pm on International Human Rights Day, with social media showing empty streets in Yangon and elsewhere. Authorities threaten up to ten years' imprisonment for disrupting the vote. *—PTI*

A man inside a damaged house amid the renewed clashes between Thailand and Cambodia *PHOTO: ANI*

5 lakh displaced as Thai-Cambodia fighting continues

SURIN, 10 DEC

Renewed border fighting between Thailand and Cambodia showed no signs of abating Wednesday, leaving at least 5,00,000 people in both countries living in strained conditions as more flooded into temporary shelters.

About 4,00,000 people have been evacuated from affected areas in Thailand, and around 700 schools closed while fighting was ongoing in four border provinces. Cambodia evacuated more than 1,27,000 villagers, and hundreds of schools closed.

Thailand's military announced that casualties this week include five soldiers killed and dozens wounded. Cambodia said seven civilians died and 20 others were wounded.

There is not yet a clear path to peace as Thailand's Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul vowed to continue to fight, and Cambodia's Senate President Hun Sen promised a fierce response.

Thailand deployed jet fighters to carry out airstrikes on "military targets", while Cambodia's launched its most fearsome weapons are BM-21 rocket launchers with a range of roughly 30-40km. They are capable of firing salvos of 40 rockets at a time and are mounted on trucks.

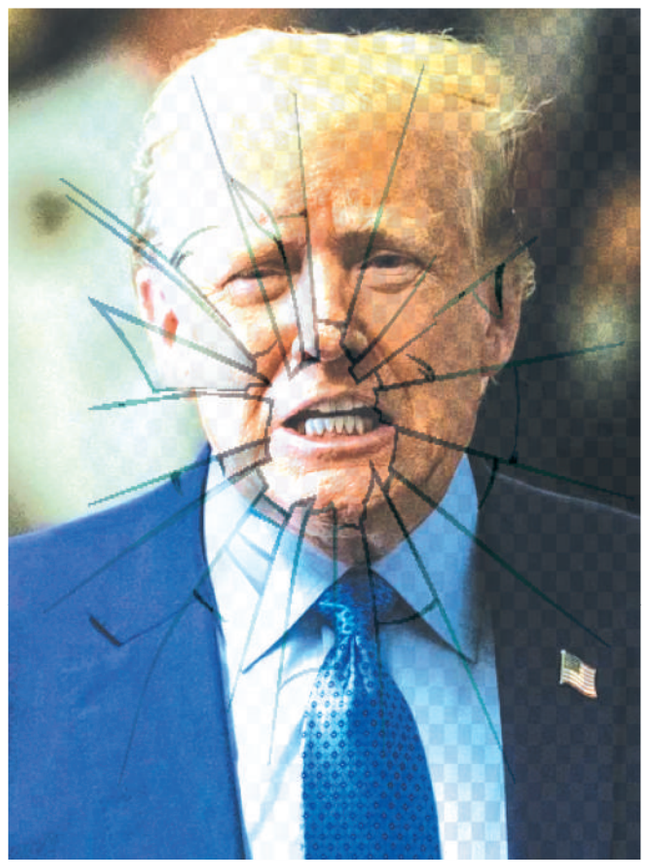
The Thai army said Cambodia launched approximately 125 salvos from BM-21 launchers totalling about 5,000 rockets.

The renewed clashes come after a US and Malaysia-brokered ceasefire ended the hostilities this summer.

US President Donald Trump said that he will call the leaders soon of both countries soon. *—PTI*

TRUMP'S NO PEACE DEALS

Trump claims to have brokered 8 peace deals, 2 of which have collapsed



A protester decries the atrocities committed in Congo in a viral skit *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Rwanda-backed M23 rebels say they seized key Congo city

GOMA, 10 DEC

Rwanda-backed rebel group M23 said that it's taken control of the strategic city of Uvira in eastern Congo on Wednesday afternoon, following a rapid offensive since the start of the month. The UN says the offensive has displaced at least 2,00,000 residents in recent days. The announcement, made on X by M23 spokesperson Lawrence Kanyuka, encouraged citizens to return to their homes.

The latest offensive comes despite a US-mediated peace agreement signed last week by the Congolese and Rwandan Presidents in Washington. The accord did not include the rebels, who are negotiating separately with the Congo and agreed earlier this year to a ceasefire that both sides accuse the other of violating.

Marafiki Masimango, a representative of Uvira civil society, said rebels were pushing south into the South Kivu province city late Tuesday and that some of government soldiers protecting the city had fled. "There's a risk of a massacre, and many people will perish," Masimango said. Both Congo and Rwanda accused each other of violating the ceasefire.

Local UN partners report lakhs are displaced since 2 December, with more than 70 killed. Earlier this year, M23 seized Goma and Bukavu, two key cities in eastern Congo.

More than 100 armed groups are vying for a foothold in mineral-rich eastern Congo near the border with Rwanda. The conflict has created one of the world's most significant humanitarian crises, with more than 7 million people displaced, officials say. *—PTI*

Af, Haiti, Somalia are 'sh*tho*e' nations: Trump

WASHINGTON, 10 DC

President Donald Trump launched into a racist rant during a rally about inflation, asking why Washington was accepting people from "sh*tho*e countries" like Somalia, Haiti and Afghanistan.

The slur had caused a major controversy during his first term, but now he doubled down on the comments, calling the countries "hellholes" on Tuesday.

Trump boasted that he had last week "announced a permanent pause on Third World migration, including from hellholes like Afghanistan, Haiti, Somalia and many other countries."

"Why is it we only take people from sh*tho*e countries,' right? Why can't we have some people from Norway, Sweden?... Send us some nice people. Do you mind?" Trump said. "But we always take people from Somalia. Places that are a disaster. Filthy, dirty, disgusting, ridden with crime."

Back in 2018, Trump's comments denigrating predominantly Black nations while seeking more migration from predominantly white countries were widely denounced as racist. But now, it was greeted warmly by a cheering audience.

During Tuesday's speech in Pennsylvania, Trump called inflation and accountability a "hoax".

Trump also described Democrat Ilhan Omar, a Minnesota representative who migrated from Somalia as "garbage".

"Ilhan Omar, whatever the hell her name is. With her cute little turban. I love her (but) she comes in, does nothing but b***h. She's always complaining," he said. "She's garbage. Her friends, garbage.... We ought to get her the hell out!"

He also claimed that Omar married her brother to gain US citizenship, an allegation that fact-checkers dismissed.

Omar hit back, saying that Trump was launching the "bigoted" remarks to distract from his failing economic policies. *—Agencies*

A file picture of Somali national army soldiers and a US Army man

> **Karoline. Isn't she great?... When she gets up there (on TV or in the White House) with that beautiful face and those lips that don't stop-op-op-op, like a little machine gun**
>
> -Donald Trump, on White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt

Trump: Birthright citizenship was for babies of slaves

Birthright citizen was meant for babies of slaves, not for rich immigrants, Trump told Politico. "It was exactly having to do with the Civil War. That case was not meant for some rich person coming from another country. That case is all about slaves, the babies of slaves, and it was a good reason for doing it."

85,000 visas revoked by US this year, says govt

The US has revoked 85,000 visas across multiple categories this year, the State Department said on X. This includes more than 8,000 students, which is more than double the numbers the year before, the post added. The post highlights the Trump administration's crackdown on immigration.

Democrat is Miami mayor, 1st in 30 yrs

Democrat Eileen Higgins won the Miami mayor's race on Tuesday, defeating Republican Emilio Gonzalez, endorsed by Trump, to end her party's nearly three-decade losing streak and give Democrats a boost in one of the last electoral battles ahead of the 2026 midterms. Higgins, 61, will be the first woman to lead the city of Miami. She spoke frequently in the Hispanic-majority city against Trump's immigration crackdown.

Nigerian army shoot 9 women protesters dead

ABUJA, 10 DEC

Nigerian soldiers opened fire and killed nine women protesting the army's handling of communal clashes in the north-eastern state of Adamawa, witnesses and Amnesty International said on Tuesday.

The women were protesting on Monday along a major road in Adamawa's local government Lamurde, when the soldiers shot at them after being stopped, witnesses and the victims' relatives said on Tuesday. Ten others were injured in the shooting, witnesses said.

But the Nigerian Army denied killing anyone and blamed the deaths on a local militia, which opened fire.

Amnesty International's Nigeria office said the agency confirmed soldiers killed the nine protesters.

"It shows that the Nigerian military has not changed much from its past record of human rights violations," Isa Sanusi, the Director of Amnesty International in Nigeria said. This is not the first such incident. *— PTI*

Pope Leo XIV arrives in St Peter's Square on the occasion of the weekly general auidence at the vacation Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Trump trying to 'break apart' US-Europe alliance: Pope

ROME, 10 DEC

Pope Leo XIV insisted on Tuesday that Europe must have a role in any Ukraine peace deal and criticised the Trump administration's efforts to "break apart" the long-standing US-European alliance.

The Pope spoke to reporters after meeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who is on another tour to rally European support for Kyiv. The American Pope said they discussed the need for a ceasefire and the Vatican's attempts to facilitate the return of Ukrainian children taken away by Russian authorities.

Leo was asked about the US peace proposal and the sidelining of European powers in the process. Speaking as he left his vacation home in Castel Gandolfo, Leo insisted that Europe's role was crucial in any deal.

Leo said what he had read about the policy would "make a huge change in what was for many, many years a true alliance between Europe and the United States." Additionally, some comments by US President Donald Trump suggest an effort "trying to break apart what I think needs to be an alliance today and in the future." *—PTI*

US COMMITS $1.25B FOR MINING IN BALOCH

ISLAMABAD, 10 DEC

The United States on Wednesday announced a significant investment aimed at boosting mining in Pakistan's Balochistan, with the US Export-Import Bank (EXIM) approving USD 1.25 billion to support the development of the Reko Diq critical minerals project.

Sharing a video on X, Charge d'Affaires ad interim at the US Embassy in Islamabad, Natalie A. Baker said the US administration has always made such deals.

She added that EXIM's financing will enable "up to USD 2 billion in high-quality US mining equipment needed to operate the Reko Diq mine, along with creating an estimated 6,000 jobs in the US and 7,500 jobs in Balochistan."

Calling Reko Diq a model for mining projects, Baker said the project will benefit "US exporters, as well as Pakistani communities by creating jobs in both nations."

She stressed that "the Trump administration has made the forging of deals like this central to American diplomacy."

"We look forward to more agreements between US companies and their Pakistani counterparts in the minerals and mining sector," she added. *—ANI*

Ukraine to vote if security ensured

KYIV, 10 DEC

Ukrainian officials are expected to hand over their latest peace proposals to United States negotiators on Wednesday, according to President Zelenskyy.

He said Ukraine would be ready for elections within three months if partners can guarantee safe voting.

Zelenskyy said on Tuesday that he is "ready" for an election but would need help from the US to hold voting.

He suggested that Ukraine could be ready to hold balloting in 60 to 90 days if that proviso is met.

Russian President Putin has repeatedly said that Zelenskyy can't negotiate a peace settlement as his five-year term that began in 2019 has expired.

Meanwhile, a new US national security strategy made it clear that Trump wants to improve America's relationship with Moscow and "re-establish strategic stability with Russia." The document also portrays European allies as weak.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Wednesday praised Trump's role in the Ukraine peace bid.

Meanwhile, Europe's support for Ukraine is uneven, after the Trump administration cut off supplies to Kyiv unless they were paid for by other NATO countries. *— PTI*

ONLY IN AFGHANISTAN

4 'Peaky Blinders' fans sent to rehab

KABUL, 10 DEC

Four young men were detained by Afghanistan's Taliban and enrolled into a rehabilitation programme for walking around in public dressed up as their favourite characters of the hit British drama 'Peaky Blinders.'

The Taliban Government's Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice said the four friends, who had become popular in their Jibrail township, in the southern province of Herat, for strutting through the streets in trench coats and flat caps, were detained for "promoting foreign culture."

The men, all in their early 20s, were detained in Jibrail, according to Saif-ur-Islam Khyber, a spokesman for the ministry. The friends, Asghar Husinai, Jalil Yaqoobi, Ashore Akbari and Daud Rasa, who appeared recently on a local YouTuber's chat show, were often seen walking around in outfits modelled on the Shelby family.

"They were promoting a foreign culture and imitating film actors in Herat.

They were arrested, and a rehabilitation programme was started for them," Khyber said Sunday in a post on one of his social media accounts.

However, on Tuesday, Khyber said the men were not formally arrested, "but were only summoned, advised and released". *—Agencies*

Four men in Afghanistan dressed like the Shelbys from 'Peaky Blinders' *PHOTO: X*

Amazon to invest $35B in India by 2030

This comes after Microsoft's $17.5B investment

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Amazon plans to invest USD 35 billion in India over the next five years to expand its businesses from quick commerce to cloud computing and artificial intelligence, as the global supermajor doubles down on its presence in the world's fastest-growing economy.

The investment by the US e-commerce giant comes a day after Microsoft pledged USD 17.5 billion in India for data centres, AI and cloud infrastructure by 2030. Previously, Google had committed USD 15 billion over the next five years to building AI data centres.

Amazon said its investments in areas such as artificial intelligence and logistics infrastructure through 2030 will help create an additional 1 million jobs in India.

The e-commerce giant is ramping up investment to compete with Walmart-backed Flipkart as well as homegrown giants like those of billionaire Mukesh Ambani and near-instant delivery firms like Eternal Ltd's Blinkt, Swiggy Ltd's Instamart and Zepto.

In 2023, Amazon announced a USD 26 billion investment *PHOTO: ANI*

Amazon has invested USD 40 billion in India since 2010. In 2023, it announced a USD 26 billion investment. The fresh investment will help increase exports for sellers in India to USD 80 billion by 2030 from USD 20 billion.

The investments, it said, are "strategically aligned with India's national priorities and will focus on expanding AI capabilities, enhancing logistics infrastructure, supporting small business growth and creating jobs."

"We're excited to continue being a catalyst for India's growth, as we democratize access to AI for millions of Indians," said Amit Agarwal, head of emerging markets at Amazon.

Making the announcement during the Amazon Smbhav Summit, Agarwal said the company has set a target to quadruple exports from India to USD 80 billion from about USD 20 billion it has facilitated as of now and create an additional one million direct, indirect, induced and seasonal jobs by 2030. He said Amazon has invested USD 40 billion in India to date and is the largest foreign investor in India, according to a Keystone report compiled from publicly available data. *—PTI*

Gautam Adani meets Microsoft Chairman Satya Nadella

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani met Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella and discussed various aspects of the future of technology.

"Always a pleasure to meet @satyanadella and gain his valuable insights into the future of technology. We are excited to continue building a 360° partnership as the physical and digital worlds converge in the age of AI," Adani said in a post on X.

"Getting a demo from him of the AI apps he is personally building was another testament to the hands-on leadership that truly great leaders exemplify," the X post by Adani wrote.

Separately, Microsoft on Tuesday announced that the company will invest USD 17.5 billion in India to support the country's rapidly expanding artificial intelligence ecosystem, and to drive AI diffusion at a population scale.

The announcement followed Nadella's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during which the two leaders discussed the country's AI roadmap and growth priorities. He called it Microsoft's "largest investment in Asia."

This afternoon, Nadella lauded India's unique ability to build a holistic technology ecosystem — the India Stack, calling the country's model a "virtuous cycle". *—ANI*

Adani to invest up to ₹12 lakh cr in India

The investment includes infra, mining, ports

DHANBAD, 10 DEC

Ports-to-energy conglomerate Adani Group is all set to invest up to Rs 12 lakh crore in India in the next six years, chairman Gautam Adani said.

The sizeable investments will be made in infrastructure, mining, renewable energy and ports, among others, he said.

"There is huge investment potential. We will invest Rs 10 to 12 lakh crore in India in the next six years," Adani told PTI. The corporate India and industrialists are aligning with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for self-reliance, a mission described as "India's new Independence", the billionaire said.

"Struggle for achieving self-reliance is on...the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) has also given a call for this... That is a new Independence. That is what every industrialist and every group is working on," Adani told PTI.

He was here to attend the centenary celebrations of IIT (ISM) Dhanbad.

The proposed investment will include infrastructure, technology, energy transition, ports and other things, he said.

Microsoft Chairman Satya Nadella with Gautam Adani *PHOTO: ANI*

"We have invested to become one of the world's fastest-growing renewable energy companies...We are preparing for a scale of expansion that matches India's aspirations for the next decade," Adani said.

The group is building the world's largest renewable energy park at Khavda in Gujarat, spreading over 520 square km. At full capacity by 2030, this park is expected to generate 30 GW of green energy, which would be equivalent to powering over 60 million homes per annum.

Besides, the group has plans to expand mining and materials - from extracting various ores to making metals, alloys and finished products for the green transition.

Asked about the challenges faced by him and his group, Adani said these are "part of the game and part of the journey", and added that "Indian industry today sees itself as a partner in nation building".

He reiterated that India's sovereignty in the 21st century will depend on "the nation's command over its natural resources and its energy systems". *—PTI*

Rupee falls 9P to close at 89.96 against USD

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

The rupee depreciated 9 paise to close at 89.96 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, tracking a negative trend in domestic equities and sustained foreign fund outflows. Forex traders said investors are in a wait-and-watch mode, awaiting clarity from the US Federal Reserve before taking decisive positions. Investors are also awaiting cues from the US-India trade talks, which could boost the rupee in the coming days. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 90.00, then fell to an intra-day low of 90.10 against the US dollar and finally settled for the day at 89.96 (provisional). *—PTI*

Starlink, India plan expansion of satellite internet

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Union Minister of Communications, Jyotiraditya Scindia, met Lauren Dreyer, Vice President of Starlink Business Operations at SpaceX, to discuss expanding satellite-based last-mile internet access across India. Emphasising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a digitally empowered nation, Scindia said satellite connectivity would be crucial for bridging the digital divide in remote and rural regions. Starlink, Elon Musk's satellite internet venture, is set to bring high-speed, affordable internet to every corner of India. Maharashtra has become the first state to partner with Starlink, signing Letter of Intent to connect government institutions, rural communities, & essential public infrastructure. *—ANI*

Naidu pushes biz rule overhaul for better governance

AMRAVATI, 10 DEC

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has called for a comprehensive overhaul of government business rules to improve governance and service delivery. Addressing ministers, secretaries and departmental heads at the state secretariat, he emphasised that the government must be willing to make bold changes for the public good. "Having amended the Constitution several times, what is wrong with changing business rules to benefit the people?" he asked. Naidu instructed officials to rescind unnecessary rules and adopt thorough change management practices to simplify governance. He also urged the use of technology & a centralised data lake to enhance efficiency, alongside conducting audits. *—PTI*

MKT VALUE HITS RS 77K CR

Meesho's shares list at over 53% premium

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

E-commerce firm Meesho made a strong debut on the stock exchanges on Wednesday and listed at over a 53 per cent premium against the issue price of Rs 111, taking the company's market valuation to Rs 77,000 crore.

The stock opened trading at Rs 162.50, up 46.40 per cent from the issue price on the NSE. During the day, it surged by 59.90 per cent to hit a high of Rs 177.49 apiece. The scrip ended the session at Rs 170.45 apiece, up by 53.56 per cent.

On the BSE, Messho's shares made a debut at Rs 161.20, registering a jump of 45.22 per cent. In the intraday session, the stock climbed 59.95 per cent to hit a high of Rs 177.55 before closing at Rs 170.20 apiece, up by 53.33 per cent.

At the end of the session, the company's market valuation stood at Rs 76,926.32 crore and

Rs 76,813.49 crore on the NSE and BSE, respectively.

The robust listing came despite weak broader market sentiment. The 30-share benchmark, BSE Sensex, dropped by 275.01 points or 0.32 per cent to settle at 84,391.27, while the 50-share NSE Nifty fell by 81.65 points or 0.32 per cent to close at 25,758.

The Initial Public Offer (IPO) of Meesho received 79.02 times subscription on the final day of share sale on Friday.

The Rs 5,421-crore IPO had a price band of Rs 105-111 per share. *—PTI*

AEQUS SHARE DEBUT END OVER 22%

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Shares of Aequs, a contract manufacturing firm specialising in consumer durable goods and aerospace parts, on Wednesday ended with a premium of 22.18 per cent against the issue price of Rs 124.

The stock began trading at Rs 140 apiece on both the BSE and NSE, reflecting a gain of 12.90 per cent. During the day, the scrip of the company appreciated by 26.61 per cent to hit a high of Rs 157 apiece on the stock exchanges.

It ended the day at Rs 151.50 apiece, rallying 22.18 per cent on the BSE.

On the NSE, it closed at Rs 150, up by 20.97 per cent.

At the end of the session, the company's market valuation stood at Rs 10,160.58 crore on the BSE.

The Rs 922-crore Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Aequs received 101.63 times subscription on the closing day of share sale on Friday.

It had a price band of Rs 118-124 per share for the issue. *—PTI*

Markets extend losses for 3rd day amid selloff

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty declined for the third straight day on Wednesday to close at a nearly month's low, dragged by a last-hour selloff in consumer durables, private banks and IT shares.

In a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped by 275.01 points, or 0.32 per cent, to settle at 84,391.27, a level not seen since 11 November. During the day, it hit an intraday high of 85,020.34 and a low of 84,313.62.

The 50-share NSE Nifty fell by 81.65 points, or 0.32 per cent, to close at a month's low of 25,758. In the intraday session, it hit a high of 25,947.65 and a low of 25,734.55.

Among the Sensex constituents, Eternal, Trent, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Bajaj

Finance, Tata Consultancy Services, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Larsen & Toubro and Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles were the laggards.

However, Tata Steel, Sun Pharmaceuticals, ITC, NTPC, Reliance Industries, HCL Technologies, PowerGrid, and Asian Paints were among the gainers. Broader markets also ended lower, with the BSE midcap gauge falling 1.08 per cent and the smallcap index slipping 0.58 per cent.

As many as 2,332 stocks declined, while 1,857 advanced and 148 remain unchanged on the BSE. *—PTI*

US court reverses $1B damages against Byju, says statement

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

A US bankruptcy court has reversed a USD 1 billion damages ruling against **Byju Raveendran**, according to a statement from the founders of Think and Learn Pvt Ltd - the parent firm of ed-tech platform Byju's.

The Delaware Court had in a default ruling last month ordered Raveendran to pay more than USD 1 billion, saying the former corporate star who set up the eponymous Indian edtech and tutoring company, had refused to cooperate with legal efforts

to locate almost half the proceeds from a USD 1.2 billion US term loan made in 2021.

He, however, contested the grounds saying the court did not give him the 30 days he had sought to arrange for a US attorney to argue his case. He vowed to appeal against the order.

"The Delaware Court has reversed the USD 1 billion Judgement against Byju Raveendran, in view of fresh submissions made by Byju Raveendran through a motion to correct the Judgement of 20 November 2025. The Court agreed that damages had not been determined and ordered a new phase to commence in early January 2026 to determine any damages related to claims against Byju Raveendran," the statement said. *—PTI*

ADB hikes India's FY26 GDP growth rate to 7.2%

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday hiked India's growth forecast for FY26 to 7.2 per cent from 6.5 per cent, driven by domestic consumption supported by tax cuts.

The sharp upgrade of 0.7 percentage points of the Indian economy will help Asia to grow at a faster pace of 5.1 per cent compared to the earlier projection of 4.8 per cent for 2025.

India's 2025 growth projection has been raised to 7.2 per cent, reflecting stronger second-quarter expansion, ADB's Asian Development Outlook said.

During the second quarter ended in September, India logged a GDP growth of 8.2 per cent compared to the 7.8 per cent recorded in the first quarter.

As a result, India has achieved an 8 per cent growth rate in the first half of the current fiscal.

The growth is attributable to robust expansion of the manufacturing and services sectors, as well as consumption and investment, it said.

The report from Manila-based multilateral development bank, however, retained the FY27 forecast at 6.5 per cent. *—PTI*

T'gana setting up Rs 1,000 cr start-up fund: CM

HYDERABAD, 10 DEC

Telangana Chief Minister **A Revanth Reddy** said on Wednesday that his government is establishing a Rs 1,000 crore fund of funds to support start-ups.

Speaking at the launch of the Google for Start-ups Hub in partnership with the Telangana government here, he said the government wants Hyderabad to become a hub not just for start-ups, but for unicorns too.

He set a target of at least 100 Hyderabad start-ups achieving unicorn status (companies worth at least USD one billion).

"Today, the Government of Telangana and Google are coming together to create a support system for you. My government is creating a Rs 1,000 crore start-up fund of funds. Use these funds and become the next Google," he said.

"My only suggestion is that you have to become one more Google from Hyderabad, or at least a USD billion company," Reddy said.

The Telangana Government organised 'Telangana Rising 2047 Global Summit' during the last two days, where it shared its vision to become a USD one trillion economy by 2034 and a USD three trillion economy by 2047, Reddy said. *—PTI*

Winter demand: SpiceJet to run 100 more daily flights

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

Domestic carrier SpiceJet on Wednesday said it is planning to introduce up to 100 additional daily flights during the current winter schedule.

The airline said it is looking to ramp up its flight operations amid the growing demand across key routes this winter, and also to ensure adequate capacity in the market.

The statement came a day after the government announced a 10 per cent cut in IndiGo's winter schedule in a bid to help the crisis-hit airline stabilise its operations and lead to reduced cancellations following the large-scale disruptions that started on 1 December. Under the current winter schedule, SpiceJet has been allowed to operate 1,568 flights per week or 224 per day, which was 20.89 per cent higher compared to 1,297 flights per week, operated by the carrier during the last winter.

As compared to the summer schedule of this year, growth was 26.45 per cent. *—PTI*

WITH UBER DIRECT

Bengalureans can now book metro ticket using Uber app

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Uber on Wednesday announced its entry into the B2B logistics space with the launch of Uber Direct, powered by the ONDC.

The company has also rolled out metro ticketing on the Uber app for Bengaluru commuters through Open Network for Digital Commerce, effective 10 December.

According to the company, unlike Uber Courier—which is booked directly by customers through the Uber app—Uber Direct functions behind the scenes as a logistics engine for businesses. Orders are placed by users on a seller's app or website, and deliveries are fulfilled by Uber Direct without any customer interaction with Uber until the delivery partner arrives.

"This makes Uber Direct, powered by ONDC, a standardised, plug-and-play solution for enterprises that need reliable, flexible and scalable delivery support," the company said.

Uber said the service went live here earlier in the day, on ONDC's open digital rails, with drivers fulfilling grocery deliveries for brands such as Zepto and KPN Farm Fresh.

"Uber Direct will be expanded to food delivery within a couple of weeks, fulfilling orders for global brands such as KFC, Burger King and Taco Bell, as well as Indian brands like Rebel Foods," it added.

Speaking at the launch, Prabhjeet Singh, President, Uber India and South Asia, said Bengaluru—"a playground for innovation"—is a natural choice for deepening Uber's integration with ONDC.

With this launch, Uber users in Bengaluru can purchase QR-based metro tickets and access real-time information for the Bengaluru Metro within the app. *—PTI*

Silver surges to new peak of Rs 1.92 lakh/kg

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Silver prices saw the steepest single-day surge in nearly two months and skyrocketed by Rs 11,500 to scale a fresh peak of Rs 1,92,000 per kilogram in the national capital on Wednesday, amid robust domestic demand fuelled by global cues.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal closed at Rs 1,80,500 per kilogram on Tuesday, and gained Rs 11,500 on Wednesday in the local retail markets.

So far this year, silver prices have added Rs 1,02,300, or 114.04 per cent, from Rs 89,700 per kg on 31 December, 2024.

Meanwhile, the price of gold of 99.9 per cent purity climbed Rs 800 on Wednesday to Rs 1,32,400 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes).

Spot gold was trading 0.16 per cent lower at USD 4,201.70 per ounce.

Spot silver climbed by 1.53 per cent to hit a record high of USD 61.60 per ounce. *—PTI*

Junior World Cup: India beat Argentina 4-2 to win bronze

Indians didn't lose heart and maintained the pressure in final quarter

India clinchesbronze with a 4-2 win over Argentina in FIH-Mens Junior Hockey World Cup PHOTO: SCEENGRAB

CHENNAI, 10 DEC

India produced a braveheart performance, nullifying a two-goal deficit to beat Argentina 4-2 and clinch the bronze medal in the FIH Men's Junior World Cup here on Wednesday.

India, which won the title in 2016 in Lucknow, failed to finish on the podium on the last two occasions, ending fourth in 2021 in Bhubaneswar and two years later in Kuala Lumpur. India produced a valiant fightback with Ankit Pal (49th minute), Manmeet Singh (52nd) and Anmol Ekka (58th) converting penalty corners, while Sharda Nand Tiwari found the net from the spot in the 57th minute.

The Argentines controlled the possession of the match in the first quarter as India struggled to get a foothold. Argentina secured their first chance in the third minute in the form of a penalty stroke following a foul by Anmol Ekka, and Rodriguez made no mistake to hand his side the lead. The Indians were guilty of giving away the ball too easily, which put paid to their chances in the first 15 minutes. India had their best shot at the goal in the 20th minute, but Dilraj Singh's shot from the top of the circle was finely saved by Argentina goalkeeper Joaquin Ruiz.

The Indians started brightly after the change of ends and secured four back-to-back penalty corners in the 31st minute, but failed to execute a single one with Anmol Ekka flicking the final one over the post. The visitors secured their fourth penalty corner in the 41st minute, but Rodriguez's flick was off target.The **Indians didn't lose heart and maintained the pressure in the final quarter** and drawing level, converting two penalty corners through deflections in the span of four minutes. —*PTI*

GREAT ACHIEVEMENT TO WIN AFTER BEING DOWN 0-2: SREEJESH

CHENNAI, 10 DEC

A delighted Indian team chief coach PR Sreejesh lavished praise on his team's lion-hearted comeback to claim the bronze medal against Argentina, in the FIH Junior Men's World Cup here on Wednesday.

India were trailing 0-2 till the final quarter before staging a remarkable comeback to win the third-fourth place match 4-2 and finish on the podium after nine years.

India last won the title way back in 2016 in Lucknow and had finished fourth in 2021 in Bhubaneswar and 2023 in Kuala Lumpur in the competition. For the juniors, this is a great journey. One thing which I told these guys is if you can survive this pressure, this is the base because you are going to face this in the future in the Olympics or other big tournaments. —*PTI*

2ND TEST

Tickner and Rae bowl WI out for 205 to give NZ the edge

WELLINGTON, 10 DEC

New Zealand fast bowler Blair Tickner was helped from the field with a shoulder injury after taking 4-32 on the first day of the second test against the West Indies on Wednesday, in the latest cruel blow in a career flecked with tragedy.

Tickner fell heavily while fielding a ball at fine leg in his first test in more than two years and only the fourth of his career. He lay motionless while being assisted by medical staff before being carefully lifted from the field on a stretcher. The teams played to a draw in the series opener at Christchurch.

Tickner bowled well in tandem with Michael Rae, who took 3-65 on debut as New Zealand bowled out the West Indies for 205 in 75 overs. Devon Conway and Tom Latham were tested in the last 40 minutes but saw New Zealand to stumps at 24 without loss. "I guess on the first day of a test match if you've rolled the other team for 200 and you're 20 or so without loss, you're happy," Tickner said. "It's been a really surreal couple of days for me since I knew I was going to play. Pinch me. "Today, if someone asked me when you get comfortable bowling...you don't."

Tickner's injury adds to a growing catalog for New Zealand, who already are without pacers Matt Henry, Will O'Rourke, Ben Sears, Nathan Smith, and Kyle Jamieson. Mitchell Hay was also handed a test debut on Wednesday in place of wicket-keeper Tom Blundell, who has a hamstring strain.

The injury to Tickner is particularly poignant, given the setbacks he has had to overcome throughout his career. Just before his test debut, his father's house was destroyed in a cyclone. And while playing for Derbyshire, his wife, Sarah, was diagnosed with leukemia. "Things are bigger than cricket," Tickner told the media before the current match.

Stumps New Zealand 24 for no loss (Conway 16*, Latham 7*) trail West Indies 205 (Hope 48, Campbell 44, Tickner 4-32, Rae 3-67) by 181 runs —*PTI*

Shooting League of India to be held from February

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The inaugural edition of the Shooting League of India (SLI) will be held from February 16 to 26 next year, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) said on Wednesday. The dates have been finalised in alignment with the International Shooting Sport Federation's (ISSF) 2026 calendar to avoid clashes with major international competitions. The league had previously been deferred to early 2026. The franchise-based league will feature several top Indian and international shooters competing in a mixed-team format across pistol, rifle, and shotgun disciplines. "The SLI is a milestone for our sport, franchise-built, athlete-first, and aligned to the global calendar to maximise participation," NRAI President Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo said in a release.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

PCB lifts Pakistan batter Haider Ali's suspension

DUBAI, 10 DEC

Pakistan Cricket Board has revoked its provisional suspension on batter Haider Ali, who has not played any competitive cricket since he was cleared of rape allegations in Manchester in September. The PCB on Wednesday confirmed that Ali was among nine Pakistani players issued NOCs to go and play in the Bangladesh Premier League. "The players have been permitted to play the event until 23rd January, " a source on the board said. Ali, who has represented Pakistan in 35 T20Is and 3 ODIs, was touring England with the Pakistan Shaheens squad when a UK-born Pakistani woman filed rape allegations against him with the Manchester city police. —*PTI*

Cricket Australia security delegation arrives in Lahore

LAHORE, 10 DEC

A Cricket Australia (CA) delegation is in Lahore to review security arrangements ahead of the team's three-match T20I series against Pakistan in January. The delegation includes an independent security advisor and an official of the Australian Cricketers' Association. Australia will tour Pakistan in early next year for a white-ball series, scheduled to be played in two phases. The first phase comprises a three-match T20I series in January. Though the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has not yet announced the venues and dates, it appears that all three games will be held in Lahore.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Women facing transgender athletes is not fair: Aryna

SYDNEY, 10 DEC

World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka weighed into the participation of transgender athletes in women's sport, saying it would be unfair for women to face "biological men" in professional tennis. The WTA Tour Gender Participation Policy currently permits transgender women to participate if they have declared their gender as female for a minimum of four years, have lowered testosterone levels, and agree to testing procedures. These conditions may be further varied by the WTA Medical Manager on a case-by-case basis. Asked about transgender athletes in an interview with Piers Morgan released on Tuesday.—*PTI*

KHO KHO CHAMPIONSHIP

PHOTO: PTI

Commonwealth Kho Kho to be held next year

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Over 24 countries will compete in the inaugural Commonwealth Kho Kho Championship from March 9 to 14 next year, for which the venue is yet to be finalised in India. The Kho Kho Federation of India is in talks with several states to finalise the venue after the Commonwealth Sport (CS) gave approval for the event to take place in India.

The event, which will see 16 men's and as many women's teams competing, will be organised on the lines of the first Kho Kho World Cup held in January this year in Delhi, in which 23 nations participated. This will be the first Commonwealth Kho Kho event in India after Ahmedabad was recently officially confirmed as the host city for the 2030 Commonwealth Games.

"We are in talks with several states for the finalisation of the venue. Ahead of the Commonwealth Games in 2030, we are hopeful that this championship would prove to be a stepping stone towards Kho Kho's inclusion in the Doha Asian Games (2030)—*PTI*

India looks to press home advantage against SA

MULLANPU, 10 DEC

There is a feeling that India is such a strong favourite for the home World Cup in two months that the one way to deny them a successful title defence is to catch them on the wrong side of the toss on a damp pitch or a dewy night.

Yet to stamp his authority in the shortest format, Shubman Gill would be eying major gains on home soil when a well-rounded India look to extend their dominance over South Africa in the second T20 International here on Thursday.

With only a travel day separating the first two games of the five-match series, Gill won't mind getting straight into the middle in search of a substantial knock.

India steamrolled South Africa in the series opener, but the middling returns from Gill, since his T20 comeback in the Asia Cup back in September, remain a talking point. Following an impressive debut as Test captain in the UK, Gill was brought back into the T20 setup.

India's selection strategy: Jitesh over Sanju

Mullanpur (New Chandigarh), Dec 10 (PTI) If starting with Jitesh Sharma in the last three T20s in Australia felt like an experiment, his selection over fellow wicket-keeper batter Sanju Samson in the series opener against South Africa provided ample clarity over team management's thought process going into the World Cup at home. The think tank can't be blamed for preferring a specialist lower-order finisher ahead of Samson, who was displaced at the top of the order for no fault of his own after Shubman Gill's return to the shortest format. He has struggled to make the eleven since then. —*PTI*

2ND T20I

Shubman Gill in action PHOTO: PTI

INDIA VS SOUTH AFRICA T20I

INDIA vs SOUTH AFRICA
Match starts at
7 pm IST

HEAD TO HEAD AT MULLANPU

PLAYED:	35
INDIA WON:	19
SA WON:	12
NO RESULT	4

Injuries test you mentally: Hardik

India's ace all-rounder Hardik Pandya on Wednesday feels a positive mindset has helped him return to the ground "stronger, bigger and better" after injury setbacks led to self-doubt. Pandya's return from a nearly two-month layoff due to a left quadriceps injury propelled India to a massive 101-run win against South Africa in the opening T20I here on Tuesday. "My mindset was really about coming back stronger, bigger, better. Injuries test you mentally, and at the same point in time, it kind of puts a lot of doubts... and a lot of credit to the loved ones," said Pandya in a video posted on bcci.tv.

KSCA President Prasad meets Karnataka CM

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Newly elected President of the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) Venkatesh Prasad and the KSCA elected members on Wednesday met Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

Prasad described the meeting "extremely positive" and "fruitful", saying they'll discuss in cabinet and assembly to bring back international cricket and IPL to iconic Chinnaswamy Stadium, pleasing fans after five decades.

Chinnaswamy Stadium hasn't hosted marquee matches since a stampede outside the ground that claimed 11 lives during the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) IPL victory celebration on 4 June. BCCI also prefer to host the Duleep Trophy and 'A' series between India and South Africa at the Centre of Excellence.

Newly elected KSCA President Venkatesh Prasad met Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar and others at the Circuit House at Belagavi on Wednesday PHOTO: SALAR

The M Chinnaswamy Stadium was scheduled to host five ICC Women's ODI World Cup 2025 games, including the final. However, the games had to be moved out after KSCA operated without a treasurer and a secretary, who had resigned on moral grounds following the stampede.

Prasad was elected as the president of the KSCA on Sunday. Sujith Somasunder, who played two ODIs for India in 1996 and was head of education at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence, was elected vice-president of the KSCA.

Prasad won the election after the former Indian pacer received unanimous backing from Anil Kumble and Javagal Srinath, among others. Venkatesh defeated his rival, KN Shanth Kumar, by a 749-558 margin.

Karnataka's Deputy CM DK Shivakumar wished the newly elected KSCA body a successful tenure and discussed ways to boost cricket infrastructure and the sport in Karnataka. —*Salar News*

KOHLI RISES TO NO 2 IN ODI RANKINGS, ROHIT SHARMA RETAINS TOP SPOT

DUBAI, 10 DEC

India's great Virat Kohli's push to regain the top ODI batter spot received a boost as he moved up to second place in the latest ICC rankings released on Wednesday.

Kohli hasn't held the No.1 position for ODI batters since he was displaced by Pakistan's Babar Azam in April 2021. But the right-hander is closing in on the top spot following his superb recent efforts for India in the three-match ODI series against South Africa.

Rohit amassed 146 runs across the series to hold on to his spot at the top of the rankings

It helped India clinch the three-match series 2-1.India ODI skipper Shubman Gill retained his fifth spot despite missing the three-match series, while stand-in skipper KL Rahul rose two places to 12th overall after making two fifties in the rubber. —*PTI*

KMSC will host iconic 49th K'taka 1000 Rally

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Karnataka Motor Sports Club (KMSC) will host the iconic 49th Karnataka 1000 Rally (K1000), the third-oldest running rally in the world, from 12 to 14 December in Tumakuru.

It is the fourth round of the Blueband FMSCI Indian National Rally Championship (INRC) 2025. The rally originated as a Time-Speed-Distance event spanning 1000 miles across multiple states, transitioning to a special stage format by 1996.

This year's route, prepared by Clerk of the Course and KMSC Vice-President Bhaskar Gupta, who also has designed K1000 stages for over 25 years, features two physical stages: Hatyalu (10.5km) and Thirtharama (27km).

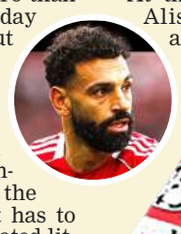
These will be run twice on Saturday and once on Sunday, totalling 112.5km of competitive gravel stages, all in the forward direction. Including transport sections, the total distance of the rally is a little over 202km, utilising new gravel routes around Tumakuru and Gubbi taluk, blending high-speed sections with narrow, technical segments and surface changes to test precision and reliability. —*PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Liverpool, without Salah, beats Inter Milan

LIVERPOOL, 10 DEC

Liverpool secured a 1-0 Champions League victory over Inter Milan, with Dominik Szoboszlai scoring a late penalty, despite Mohamed Salah's absence In all honesty, the Reds played little better at San Siro than they had on Saturday night at Leeds without Salah.



Alexander Isak went missing up front, as he so often has since arriving at Anfield for a British-record fee during the summer, although it has to be said Liverpool created little for the Swede, primarily because Florian Wirtz started on the bench. However, the visitors were, at least, far more solid in defence, with Joe Gomez and Andy Robertson nullifying Inter's threat out wide.

At the same time, Alisson Becker also kept a very low-quality Champions League clash scoreless with a smart save from Lautaro Martinez just before the break. Liverpool then nicked a badly-needed win right at the death, with the Video Assistant Referee flagging a very minor pull on Wirtz's shirt by Nerazzurri defender Alessandro Bastoni. Christian Chivu & Co. were enraged by the belated decision to award a penalty, but Slot obviously didn't care.

Inter midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu limped off early with a groin problem, and Andy Robertson was in danger of swiftly following the Turkey international when the Liverpool full-back was left in a heap by a reckless sliding challenge from Lautaro Martinez, which saw the Argentinian forward rightly cautioned.

It took the best part of 20 minutes for either side to muster a goal threat, and Inter keeper Yann Sommer had to be alert to beat out shorts from Curtis Jones and Ryan Gravenberch in the space of 60 seconds as the contest began to open up after a cautious start. —*PTI*

Dominik Szoboszlai PHOTO: X/@ LIVERPOOL